

CONTENT ANALYSES OF FIVE SHORT STORIES PREFERRED
BY A GROUP OF HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN
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IN APPRECIATION

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C. B. J. B.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale.--In this age of mass media, rapid transportation, and almost instantaneous communication, it is becoming increasingly difficult to persuade our teenagers to take time to read or to read thoughtfully anything with a copyright date older than yesterday. When high school students do read, they read, to a discouraging extent, purely for escape from the private and world problems which dominate their minds and lives.

Students are often unaware that many of the problems which they face today have been around for a long, long time. Prejudice, dishonesty, greed and many more are not peculiar to the second half of the Twentieth Century. Sometimes boys and girls are surprised to discover that it was not just last year that parents began to disapprove of their teen-age child's dates especially when they are exposed to Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Such stories carry a universal theme and if boys and girls can be motivated into reading them, they may find some likenesses to their problems.

Too often boys and girls read low-quality short stories which are found on the news racks of drug stores, five and dime stores, and news-stands. Perhaps one should be satisfied to know that they read, but the satisfaction is not genuinely felt until the students read materials of high quality. To be realistic, it must be admitted that it is impossible to expect that all high school students can read and interpret classics. One of the major obstacles to the below-average student's thoughtful reading of a classic is his inability to make the transfer from the

setting of the story to his own life. At one moment, the student on this level is totally immersed in the plot. During the next, he has abruptly returned to his present surroundings. The thought that what he has read might be of some use in his own life does not seem real to such a student. It is almost impossible to expect the student to apply the solution of the problems in the classic story to his own present-day dilemmas. For some of the answers to his needs, he turns to the cheaper quality of stories as found in "true story" type magazines.

It was believed that one way of motivating students to read stories of high quality could possibly be found from a study which would indicate short story preferences of a group of Archer students. These preferences could be analyzed to see which characteristics in the stories selected would hold highest appeals for these boys and girls. From the findings, teachers could base their selections of short stories to be read by the classes and thus eliminate some of the boredom which dominates English classes when literature is being taught.

It has been indicated by studies that the boys and girls who attend Samuel Howard Archer High School are culturally deprived and of low-economic status. English teachers, however, seem to feel that they must expose these same adolescents to the types of literature which appear in selected anthologies. Each year there arises the question of which types of poetry, short stories, essays and biographies should be introduced to these boys and girls. Many teachers do not really take time to study the interests of the students nor do they take into consideration the fact that these boys and girls have many factors which prohibit their understanding of the various types of literature as set forth in

anthologies. Instead, some teachers prepare beautifully constructed units and proceed to teach these units in literature to those few students who have somehow realized the values and rewards of an education.

The writer felt that too often the majority of the students, in English classes are required to read short stories which they do not understand or do not have an interest in reading. These students often become bored as a result of low interest. The writer, however, does not accept the idiom that "all is lost" for such students, but rather feels that there must be a way to reach the majority of them.

The writer wished to conduct a study which would be of service to the Department of English and the students at Samuel Howard Archer High School. This study, it was hoped, would lead the way for other studies which would involve all other types of literature as well as compare the preferences of these Archer students with those of future years.

With the special needs of the boys and girls in mind, a study using the short story could prove most beneficial to the English Department and the students at Samuel Howard Archer High School. First, it would benefit the teachers by serving as concrete evidence of preferences of students. From these preferences of short stories and content of short stories, teachers would select other stories which would have some similarities. Second and last, it would benefit the students in that the stories selected by teachers would appeal to their interests as well as meet some of their special needs in reading.

Statement of the Problem.--What were elements of general appeal and special characteristics of five short stories preferred by a selected group of high school juniors who were in attendance at Samuel Howard

Archer High School, Atlanta, Georgia, 1965-66?

Purposes.--Through the process of content analyses of the short stories and a study of students' reactions to them, the purposes of this study were pursued within the limits of the following questions:

1. What five short stories out of twenty-five were preferred by a selected group of high school juniors?
2. How could these short stories be characterized in terms of setting, plot and types of conflict, climax, theme, atmosphere and quality?
3. What elements prevalent in the stories held highest appeal for the students?
4. What were the reactions of the group to the five short stories?
5. From analyses and interpretations, what implications could be drawn for improvement and enrichment of the teaching of literature?

Definition of Terms.--

Atmosphere - The dominant mood that is inspired upon the reader.

Characters - The characters of a story are the people in it. There are three kinds of characters: type, individual, and developing.

Conflict - The dominant struggle within a story. This struggle may be either of the following kinds of conflict: physical, classical, romantic, social, and psychological.

Plot - A plot is a series of incidents increasing in complexity until a climax is reached and a new situation is evolved.

Theme - The theme of a short story is a universal or general truth

of life which the author wishes to present.

Short Story - The short story is a brief piece of fiction that deals with a single crucial incident in the lives of its characters.

Limitations of the Study.--There were certain inherent limitations in this study. First of all it was limited to thirty-five juniors out of a class of approximately two-hundred eighty juniors who attended Samuel Howard Archer High School during the 1965-66 school term. The students had had very little instruction in the short story and most of their answers seemed to have grown out of their own experiences.

The selections of short stories were determined by the writer. All of the stories used were written in prose, and they were all selected from high school literature anthologies.

Method of Procedure.--The procedure used in this study was as follows:

1. Permission was secured from Dr. Jarvis Barnes, Assistant in the Research and Development Department, Atlanta Board of Education, to use a group of juniors at the Samuel Howard Archer High School.
2. The writer made a survey of related literature pertinent to the study.
3. The writer read and annotated twenty-five short stories and presented them to her adviser for criticisms, extensions and deletions.
4. On the basis of annotations, each student chose five of the twenty-five short stories selected by the researcher.

5. The writer made and distributed questionnaires to the selected students.
6. As each one of the five short stories was read, the juniors indicated their reactions through the questionnaire.
7. The writer made a content analysis of each story.
8. Data were assembled and interpreted.

Description of the Subjects.--The thirty-five high school juniors that were used in this study attended Samuel Howard Archer High School which is located in the northwest section of Atlanta. The following communities are situated in this area: Perry Homes, Scott's Crossing, Rockdale, Lincoln, Blandtown, Perry Heights, Herndon Homes, Bolton, Bellwood, Hollywood Hills, Carver Hills, and Carey Park. Most of the communities were relatively new and grew out of City-planning and/or Urban renewal. The home types consist mainly of one-family dwellings and apartments.

It was evident from a survey of personal data sheets that the majority of adults in this community had limited education; therefore, the professional and skilled workers were few in number and the majority of the people are unskilled workers.

Limited library services were available to the students within their communities. A Bookmobile circulated through the Perry Homes and Herndon Homes communities semi-monthly for about three hours and the students make extensive use of the school's library during the school year and during the summer vacation.

On a whole, the thirty-five juniors had had reading experiences of short stories other than those assigned to them in their English classes. They indicated on interest inventories that they had read the following

types of short stories on their own: adventure, sports, career, mystery and detective, love, and science fiction. All of the juniors indicated that they liked to read certain types of short stories, and that they usually did not like to read all types of stories, and that they especially did not like to read some of the stories that were assigned to them in English classes. They indicated that these stories were most times teacher selected, teacher dominated, dull and uninteresting, and usually had no connections with the problems and events of their modern day lives.

The thirty-five juniors had achieved academically, and had at one time or were presently on the honor roll. Their reading levels ranged from 9.6 to 12.5. They were an alert group, and they were quite interested in participating in the study; however, at times they indicated a lack of interest in answering some parts of the questionnaires. This lack of interest may have stemmed from the fact that they had had very little instruction in the short story.

Description of Data Gathering Instruments.--After the study was approved, the selected juniors were asked to read twenty-five annotations of short stories which were taken from high school anthologies. They were asked to rate their preferences of five of these short stories according to first choice, second choice, third choice, fourth choice, and fifth choice. They were then asked to read the five short stories which received the highest number of preferences.

When they had finished the reading, they were asked to complete a questionnaire which was divided into two parts. The first part was specifically designed to determine what elements prevalent in the story

held highest appeal for the students. For this purpose, the students were asked to rate the items under each question by placing numbers or an "X" in the parentheses opposite the item. The ratings had the following meanings:

"3" indicated "Highest in Appeal"
"2" indicated "Average in Appeal"
"1" indicated "Limited in Appeal"
"0" indicated "No Appeal"
"X" indicated "No Evidence of Such
was in the Story"

The second part of the questionnaire was designed primarily to ascertain the students' reactions to the short stories - their likes and dislikes. This part of the questionnaire required the students to respond by the use of a check mark and by filling in answers in spaces provided. The latter procedure was an effort to give the students an opportunity to express their personal opinions about the stories in their own words.

The writer asked that the students read the stories and answer the questionnaires either outside of class or at their appointed enrichment and free reading hours.

Survey of Related Literature.--This survey constitutes literature embracing four main areas: (1) the importance of interest in selection of reading materials; (2) methods of determining reading preferences; (3) survey of related problems dealing with content analysis; (4) the short story as a means of developing interest in and concern about reading among adolescent students.

Authorities seem to agree that interest is a major factor in the selection of reading materials and that there has been increasing recognition of the role played in learning and habit formation by the factor of interest. However, there is much diversity among the authorities as to which selections young adults genuinely enjoy. The early adolescent is sometimes completely audacious in his beliefs. His fascination with the bizarre is the "steppingstone" from childhood fantasy to the adult awe of the unknown and occult. The slimy, crypt-dwelling monster of the comic book, which has aroused so much adult censure, is simply the creature of this intermediate stage of development and is presented at a higher level of artistry by Edgar Allan Poe, one of the favorite storytellers of adolescents. The channel of interests of adolescents can lead from the Black Lagoon type of creature to Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde, Coleridge's "Christabel," and James's The Turn Of The Screw. Inherent in the human being are depths of curiosity which cannot be satisfied by mass communication, newspaper headlines or television broadcasts. These depths must be plumbed, or this curiosity will be lost to the television or motion picture screen, where the ordering of experience seldom reaches that on the printed page.¹

In its function as vicarious experience, then literature can do much to meet the need for escape from the confines of the moment and to satisfy the adolescent's thirst for action and his inherent curiosity. In a sense, all of the functions of literature could be subsumed under "vicarious experience." Because literature is an "ordering" and

¹Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study In The High School (New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 5.

"synthesizing" of experience, it can give a perspective essential to maturity of mind and "the flexible but penetrating awareness of the human situation, sometimes gay, sometimes grave, that we call wisdom."¹

There are many opinions about the interests that people have in various kinds of reading materials. There is, for example, the opinion that, for the great mass of people, the chief function of reading is to amuse. The reader reads to forget. His business affairs and personal worries plague him most of the time. Reading is the anodyne. He does and should read whatever does not concern him directly. The art of literature should beguile him to far countries, strange peoples, and situations in which he plays the role of hero and comes back to reality refreshed.²

Another opinion is that the function of reading is to inform. The reader reads to learn. He does so many things he later regrets simply because he knows no better, that he should get all the information he can from his reading. Life is short and life is earnest. All people should be induced to read as much serious matter as possible.³

Other popularly accepted opinions about reading interests in general can be listed indefinitely: most people read trashy fiction; most people read substantial books in libraries; the movies and radio have taken the place of reading for most people; the astonishing success of

¹Robert B. Heilman, "Literature and Growing Up," The English Journal, XLV (September, 1956), 309.

²Douglas Waples, and Ralph W. Tyler, What People Want to Read (University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 2.

³Ibid., p. 6.

book-of-the-month clubs has made the reading of books almost universal; people read mostly about sex. Each of these is stated in terms of black and white; hence, none is correct. The fact is that most people read some of all kinds of material and for a wide variety of reasons.¹

Many people have an interest in reading because they are searching for knowledge or want to learn. Thorndike has ably demonstrated the fact that, in respect to learning abilities for which objective tests have been devised, the loss in efficiency caused by increasing age is less than was formerly supposed. In colloquial terms, "we are never too old to learn." This fact supplies a powerful incentive to students seeking to define the needs of adults for relatively substantial reading matter.²

Gray has estimated, by his summary of evidence available for the general population, that what adults have an interest in reading is increasingly large in amount and very unequally distributed among sections of years of schooling, and different social environments. Taken as a whole, Gray's contribution has established the facts that all but five per cent of the entire adult population know how to read and are reading material of very uneven quality.³

Each of the studies just mentioned emphasizes the importance of interest: Thorndike's evidence that adults can learn, and Gray's

¹Ibid.

²R. L. Thorndike, Children's Reading Interests (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), p. 48.

³William S. Gray, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), pp. 144-53.

evidence that adults read much trash. Both point unmistakably to the problem of finding what adults want to read about and why they want to read it.

Terman and Lima reported that for the age period eleven to sixteen that boys are interested in adventure, biography, historical narrative, inventions, mechanics, mythology, and science. Current findings agree with the interests which Terman and Lima report to be dominant. These authors indicated that a strong interest in mechanics and science is confined to smaller groups than is the interest in adventure, sports, and biography. About twenty-five per cent of eleven-year-old boys express some interest in books on mechanics, electricity, aircraft, or exploration. They, also, reported that girls eleven to sixteen enjoy stories of home and school life, of adventure, of domestic animals, and of love; and biography. They state that eleven-year-old girls "still retain interest in fairy tales and fantastic stories."¹ This lost of interest is not mentioned in the author's statements with respect to the reading habits of older girls.

Thorndike reported that sex is conspicuously more important than age or intelligence in influencing children's choices of reading materials. For boys the more favorable special interest factors are: animals, outdoor adventure, mystery, success, sports, travel, exploration, biography, war, occupations. The unfavorable factors are: mild child adventure, child life in other lands, magic and phantasy, romantic love, school life, feminine activities, self-improvement. For girls he found the

¹L. M. Terman and M. Lima, Children's Reading (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 36.

following factors to be favorable: animals, mild child adventure, child life in other lands, magic and phantasy, romantic love, adult adventure, success, school life, feminine activities, war, self-improvement, occupations. Unfavorable factors were: sports, mythology, travel, hobbies, science, and biography.¹

The most comprehensive study of the reading interests of high school students was made over a period of twelve years by George Norvell and published in 1950. His research concentrates on the factors affecting the reading choices of adolescents, grades seven through twelve. Norvell found that the sex of the individual reader was the most significant single factor.²

A sharp difference between the reading interests of boys and girls occurs in later childhood and continues into late adolescence. Boys seldom like the same books as girls. Whereas boys want books with predominantly male characters with much robust action and no sentiment, the girls of early and middle adolescence prefer books with a good bit of romance. Girls at this age will read and often like books written for boys, but boys seldom read or like a book written for girls. During the middle-adolescent period, girls read mostly fiction whereas boys read more factual material. Only a few books will be satisfying to both boys and girls. As adolescents approach adulthood this extreme difference between the sexes in what they choose to read lessens. Older girls and women continue to avoid violence and brutality in their reading, while

¹Thorndike, loc. cit., p. 63.

²George Norvell, The Reading Interests of Young People (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1950), p. 78.

the men continue to shy away from too much sentiment and too many effeminate qualities. Throughout life women continue to read more fiction and men continue to read more biography and non-fiction. The differences in reading tastes between the sexes in adults are based more upon individual personality and taste than upon sex.¹

Norvell identified a second factor that affects reading interests of adolescents as that of age. There are marked differences between what a twelve-year-old likes to read and what his eighteen-year-old counterpart would choose. Norvell points out in his study that this change is gradual from level to level although continuous and inevitable. He further points out that a literary selection well liked in a particular grade will usually be liked two or three grades above or below. This means that a single grade-level designation cannot be placed on a piece of literature as being appropriate for that grade alone. There is no such thing, then, as "an eighth grade book" or a "tenth grade book" in terms of reading interest nor probably even in reading level.²

Intelligence is a third factor affecting reading interests of young people. Terman and Lima, Thorndike and Norvell have all paid special attention to the effects of intelligence on reading interests in their respective investigations. They agree that intelligence plays a significant part in what young people choose to read. They also agree that the difference is principally one of the rapidity with which young people go through the pattern of reading interests and a given level of

¹Ibid., p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 95.

reading. "The patterns of interest for bright and slow children of the same age are much alike, but the resemblance is increased when the bright children are two or three years younger than the slow group."¹

Ray H. Simpson and Anthony Soares reported the characteristics of best-liked and least-liked short stories as shown by the responses of a sample 4,250 seventh-eighth, and ninth-grade students. Eight hundred and sixty-two short stories were carefully removed from thirty-five junior high school anthologies. They indicated that the students rated those stories which had obscure authors as having been "high" in appeal. An analysis of the stories rated as "low" in appeal made it appear that a story was sometimes included in an anthology more for eminence of the author than quality of the story and its probable appeal to the students. They further reported that the students indicated that high stories had much more emphasis upon plot and much less emphasis on theme than did low stories. A study of the perspective of the narrators revealed that stories tended to be of high interest when the author told the story without being himself a character in it. The omniscient author was much more frequently found in high stories than in low ones. In contrast to the low stories which had little suspense, the high stories had much suspense. While the low stories stressed little conflict, the high stories did have external conflict more often than either internal, or external and internal combined. The stories rated "high" in interest contained some dialogue rather than none or much, while the stories with no dialogue were usually rated "low" in interest. The content in the low stories was mostly of the nonfiction type, while the high stories were

¹
Ibid.

concerned mostly with teenage problems, sports, animals, fantasy, and adventure.¹

Johnson and Shores found in a study of the reading and reference interests of boys and girls in the junior high schools that the interest of junior high school students in animals was twice that shown in the senior high school and only one-third as great as that shown in the elementary grades. Beginning in the junior high school, there was an expected shift away from interest in cowboys, westerns, fairy tales, and myths. The teachers in the junior high schools did not report the reading interests of their pupils as accurately as did the elementary school teachers.² Shores also found that the reports of the teachers in the high school concerning the reading interests of their pupils did not correspond to those of their own students.

Methods of Determining Reading Preferences.--There have been devised and used various methods by which reading preferences of young people can be determined. One such method is the use of check lists. Schedules are sometimes prepared which consist essentially of a list of items with a place to check or mark "yes" or "no," for the purpose of calling attention to various aspects of an object or situation, to make certain that nothing of importance is overlooked. A check list may be used to direct attention to certain large aspects of a situation or setting, or to check against the completeness of details, according to the nature of

¹Ray H. Simpson and Anthony Soares, "Best-and Least-Liked Short Stories in Junior High School," The English Journal, LIV (February, 1965), 108-111.

²Charles E. Johnson and Harlan J. Shored, "Reading and Reference of Junior-High Students," Illinois Education, LI (May, 1963), 297.

the instrument used. Checklists are useful in collecting information about the student's interests, problems, wishes, hobbies, and reading preferences.¹

Anderson made a study in which data with respect to boys' and girls' reading interests were collected. One of his instructions submitted to high school pupils in Fort Dodge, Iowa, read as follows: "Underline the kinds of reading that you like: travel, great men, great women, adventure, love stories, how to make things, and science."² Reports were received from five hundred-eighty-eight pupils for grades nine to twelve. In view of the fact that the pupils represented four different grades further subdivided into boys and girls, and that pupils checked only the kinds of reading which they liked, the results for the subdivisions could hardly be expected to be entirely dependable.³

Thorndike, through the use of annotated titles in grades four to twelve, drew conclusions with respect to trends in reading interests. Pupils were supplied with questionnaires on which they indicated their interest in particular titles by checking one of three levels of interest. Interest scores for the various titles were computed through the use of a formula.⁴

¹Florence D. Cleary, Blueprints For Better Reading (New York: Wilson Company, 1957), p. 42.

²L. M. Turman and M. Lima, Children's Reading (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1925), p. 57.

³Ibid., p. 73.

⁴Thorndike, loc. cit., p. 34.

Russell and Bullock asked fifteen hundred students to express their preferences as to stories relating to the following: adventure, travel, great men, great women, love, ghosts, detectives, and war. Their data, collected from pupils in grades three to twelve, show that for every one of the interests tested a high point was reached after a period of years and then remained high or gradually receded over a period of years.¹

Various methods of ascertaining reading interests have been employed. Most of them have been based, more or less, on the subjective judgements of pupils. Norvell's most extensive data from more than fifty thousand students in grades seven to twelve in all types of communities in New York State was obtained by use of check list of titles including different literary forms. These forms were novel, play, short story, biography, essay, poem, letter, and speech.² Zeller presented titles known to have specific interest factors such as a well-defined plot, humor, and happy ending for pupils to check their preferences.³

Dr. James R. Squire explored the responses of fifty-two ninth and tenth grade students while they were reading four selected short stories. He hoped that the investigation might guide teachers to improve techniques in approaching the study of literature with their students. Each of the stories were divided into six parts and oral responses were

¹ J. E. Russell and R. W. Bullock, "Some Observations of Children's Reading," N. E. A. Journal, XLII (March, 1947), 1015.

² Norvell, loc. cit., p. 4.

³ Dale Zeller, The Relative Importance of Factors of Interest in Reading Materials for Junior High School Pupils (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941), p. 60.

recorded immediately after each part had been read. In general, the first division of each story presented the exposition and included an incomplete presentation of both the characters and the problem, with subsequent segments presenting the development of the action as unfolded by the author.¹

After completing a questionnaire study of the favorite magazines of sixty students in the ninth grade, Adams determined the order of preference for each magazine, evaluated the quality of each periodical, and measured the relationships of "quality preferences" to the I. Q. scores of the students studied.²

The questionnaire is most easily employed with large numbers of students covering a wide geographical area. The check-list form of questionnaire seems objective and is easy to tabulate. One is never quite sure just what the check means. It is very easy for the indifferent student or the pupil who is docile and eager to make a good impression to check items indiscriminately with very little basis for his response. Another criticism of some of the check lists used is that the general categories such as "adventure" or "humor" give no information on interests in the many different varieties of adventure and humor. Listing titles is unsatisfactory because students may or may not have had the opportunity to read many of the titles in the list. Writing the names of books one has read is more likely to be authentic, even though some

¹James R. Squire, The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), p. 35.

²John Q. Adams, "A Study of Leisure Time Reading Preferences of Ninth-Grade Students," High School Journal, XLVI (November, 1962), 10-15.

do not remember all the books they have read. This may apply to short stories, also.¹

Survey of Related Problems Dealing with Content Analysis.--The mere identification of preferences among short stories is not enough to guide teachers in the selection of stories which are to be assigned to adolescents to read. In order to go a step further and identify specific elements which hold high appeal for adolescents, teachers and investigators have found that a content analysis of short stories is quite informative, because it tends to ask relatively many questions about relatively few elements in the story. Content analysis seeks to describe publications with primary attention being given to their influences upon typical readers. It's validity rests upon three assumptions. The first assumption is:

that the publications to be analyzed affect readers in ways that can be specified. The stimuli may range from the impersonal but useful fact to the highly personal stimuli that produce pity and terror; but some stimuli must be present.²

The second assumption is that:

the role of the publication as a factor in the resulting effects is revealed by its manifest content, by the collection of symbols which make it up. This view of content analysis omits consideration of such closely associated factors as the author's status or popularity of the publication.³

The third assumption is that "the stimuli supplied by given

¹ Ruth Strang, C. M. McCullough, A. F. Traxler, Problems in The Improvement of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955), p. 314.

² D. Waples, B. Berelson, and F. Bradshaw, What Reading Does to People (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 146.

³ Ibid., p. 147.

publications may be identified by appropriate methods of analysis."¹

Content analysis has been used for several purposes and the usage or functions of content analysis can be classified into three main groups. First, there are the analyses of content which are designed to illuminate the cultural or personal conditions under which the communication was produced, the preconditions which determine the nature of the communication. The second group has to do with the characteristics of the content itself without direct reference either to its origins or to its effects. These uses deal with various aspects of the content per se. Finally, the third group involves the analysis with a view to determining the effects of communications upon the attention, attitudes, or acts of the audience.²

The nature of any one analysis is determined by three factors: the purposes of the analyst, the assumed characteristics of the reader, and the characteristics of the publication. The first sets the aim of the analysis and the second and third suggest the appropriate categories. Although the analyst states the problem for investigation, the nature of that problem may arise from the intentions of the author or the motivations of the reader or the curiosity of the analyst. That is, the analyst may state the problem in terms of the stimuli which the author intended his writing to supply, or in terms of the reader's expected satisfactions, or in terms of whatever effects the analyst forecasts from his advantageous position as informed observer.³

¹Ibid., p. 152.

²Ibid., p. 148.

³Ibid.

Mention of a few methods of content analysis may suggest the variety of possible applications. The categories may range in scope from the gross to the particular. They may involve substantive distinctions, which appear as such in the content, and formal distinctions, which do not. The analyst may note merely the frequency of items in each category, or he may note the expressions of approval or disapproval attached to them. He may employ an intensive analysis, which asks relatively many questions about relatively few publications, or an extensive analysis, which asks few questions about many publications. The intensive analysis is generally more appropriate for the stimuli applied to homogeneous group readers; and the extensive, to the major stimuli exerted by a homogeneous group of publications. The two analyses can be effectively combined, with one illuminating the other at points where interpretations are difficult.¹

Nathaniel B. McMillian did an analysis of journals published by state education associations, for the purpose of locating materials contributing to regional improvement in terms of criteria relating to a point of view of regionalism instead of traditional sectionalism, Awareness of the South as a region, abundant natural resources of the region, the region's deficiency of capital wealth, the region's deficiency of institutional services, waste of the region's resources, a plan or program for alleviating a problem or relieving a deficiency, and progress in the direction of regional improvement.²

¹Ibid., p. 151.

²Nathaniel B. McMillian, "Analysis of Journals," N. E. A. Journal, XLV (October, 1950), 674.

An attempt was made by Donald Faulkner to determine the principles of higher internal administration through analysis of the literature. Expressed or implied statements of principles of internal administration and original statements of principles were translated in terms of standard dictionary definitions, and then condensed into general statements. The process of briefing the literature and condensation of these statements was continued until several hundred statements, as briefed consecutively from the literature, had failed to furnish any essentially new statements of principles of higher administration.¹

Getzels and Jackson conducted a study in which they analyzed the fantasy material of stories written by adolescents. Stories written by highly creative adolescents were significantly better than those written by highly intelligent adolescents in composition assignments involving stimulus-free themes, unexpected endings, humor, incongruities, and playfulness. The highly creative students had the ability to re-structure easily and rapidly stereotyped objects. Students who were highly creative were not "stimulus bound;" they wrote stories with wit and balance; they risked creating new art forms.²

Evans and Lynch made a detailed quantitative analysis of seventy-two high school anthologies of literature and of fifty-six grammar and composition volumes. They found that the eighty-five hundred selection in the anthologies were almost all excerpted or abridged and could be

¹Donald Faulkner, "Generalizations Through Condensation: A Research Technique," Educational Research Bulletin, XIV (November, 1940), 492-93.

²Jacob W. Getzels, and Philip W. Jackson, Creativity and Intelligence: Explorations With Gifted Students (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), p. 196.

classified as follows: two hundred novel, two hundred plays, two hundred-fifty essays, one thousand six hundred pieces of nonfiction, five hundred or more poems, and over one thousand two hundred fifty short stories. The average contents of a volume ran to one hundred twenty selections by ninety different authors with approximately two hundred-thirty-five pages of "editorial apparatus."¹

After analyzing the contents of seventy-two literature and fourteen sets of grammar and composition texts which were used in grades nine through twelve at the time of their survey, Lynch and Evans arrived at a number of conclusions, among which were the following: (a) anthologies average out to about three pounds and six hundred-eighty pages per column; (b) several anthologies contain selections which are adapted or abridged without any indication concerning the changes made from the original works; and (c) Shakespeare is given only four per cent of the total space in anthologies.²

Milton L. Barron made a content analysis of humor, based on three anthologies of jokes concerning three American ethnic groups, three hundred negro jokes, one hundred-sixty jewish, and two hundred-four Irish, a total of seven hundred-thirty four jokes; divided into six categories. These categories were dialect, theme, proper names, sex composition, occupations, and intergroup or intragroup composition.³

¹Bertrand Evans, and James J. Lynch, High School English Textbooks: A Critical Examination (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963), p. 526.

²Ibid., pp. 243-48.

³Milton L. Barron, "A Content Analysis of Intergroup Humor," American Sociological Review, XV (February, 1953), 88-94.

Many different and varied methods have been used to determine the appealing features in reading materials. Content analysis is one such method.

The Short Story as a Means of Developing Interest.--High school English teachers universally find the short story the most successful form of literature with adolescents. Stories are eminently "teachable" partly because they are inherently appealing. Everyone from three to three-score years likes a story, whether in printed or visual form. The magazine, television screen, and school anthology make the short story the most available form of literature. The form is especially suited for reading in common. In terms of time investment, the story far above or below the level of individual students does not carry the same amount of penalty that the novel or drama or epic poem do. Reading the short story gives the poorer reader a sense of accomplishment impossible for him to have from reading longer types of literature. Many short stories can be read and discussed within one class period, and using a group of stories gives the teacher a chance to cover a great deal of ground in teaching the skills of reading fiction. The study of short stories also provides an excellent opportunity for motivating students' writing.

Despite the ease with which it can be used in the classroom, the short story should not be overstressed at the expense of the novel, for it lacks the power of the novel. Ray B. West points out, "the short story is to literature as the microscope is to science, giving otherwise impossible glimpses of experience, it cannot give the same opportunity for identification, for insight into human motivation that the novel

affords. The short story's scope is "moral revelation:" the novel's, "moral evolution."¹

Though the short story has been a major literary form since early in the nineteenth century, the last three decades have brought wide variety and experimentation in the years, and students in the high school need definite training if they are to deal intelligently with many serious stories. They need to know the four amalgamations discussed by Mark Schorer. These amalgamations occur in (a) story method; (b) character portrayal; (c) attitude toward material; and (d) style.²

Many teachers find that the short story is the most satisfactory form for introducing the study of prose literature. In the first place, it is possible to find stories which have broad appeal to a group of modern young people and so can demand their immediate attention. Secondly, the short story writer must create one single impression, which simplifies the approach to analysis of the story. Thus, the student can learn in easy steps the art of analyzing various elements which will be combined in longer and more involved forms of literature.

Students need to know that a short story is a brief piece of fiction that deals with a single crucial incident in the lives of its characters, and they need to know the basic elements which appear in short stories such as character portrayal, plot and types of conflict, setting, climax, theme, atmosphere and quality.

¹Ray B. West, "The Modern Short Story and the Highest Forms of Art," The English Journal, XLVI (December, 1957), 531-39.

²Mark Schorer, The Story: A Critical Anthology (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950, p. 433.

There are three kinds of fiction characters: type, individual, and developing. A type character displays but one trait. The villain, the dupe, the clown, the butler, the faithful lover, and numerous other stock characters are examples of type character. An individual character shows various traits which may be from three to five in number, while a developing character changes during the course of the story. If he changes for the better he is a reforming character, but if he changes for the worse, he is a deteriorating character.

Every story has some type of plot which is a series of incidents increasing in complexity until a climax is reached and a new situation is evolved. The essential element of plot is conflict which is not necessarily a pitched battle, a fight or even an open argument. It may be a subtle combat of wits, friction of temperament, clash of ideals, or merely striking contrasts.

Basically, there are five kinds of conflict: physical, classical, romantic, social and psychological. In physical conflict, the leading character struggles against the forces of nature, animals, or other men with his physical strength, in classical conflict, he struggles against fate, in romantic conflict, the leading character struggles against the villain, in social conflict, he struggles against the ideas, practices, or customs of other people, and in psychological conflict, the struggle is in the mind of the leading character. Within his own soul the forces of good and evil or strength and weakness contend for domination. Most stories have more than one type of conflict, but there is always one type which dominates the others. The classification of conflict in a story is determined by the dominant struggle.

All short stories will have a setting which is the time and place of the events within it, and a climax which is the end of the struggle. Sometimes the setting is the dominant element in a short story and is very obvious. Occasionally, the reader has to infer the time or place, and it may be most important that he do this. Stories of the far North, the desert, the tropics, for example, in which there are obvious clues to setting, provide good training in this type of inference for high school pupils.

Not all fiction is concerned with any definite theme which is a universal or general truth of life that the author wishes to present, but it is important that students develop the ability to handle theme in mature fiction. After students have an understanding of what theme is in fiction, they can be helped by being made aware of the way in which understanding the use of details can aid them to perceive the theme. Often there will be statements of the theme by the author or by characters in the short story.

In order to deal with theme, and the general significance of a selection, high school students need to learn to judge details in terms of the author's attitude toward his material. These attitudes lie on a continuum between symbolism and naturalism. The problem of interpreting symbolism underlies the entire study of literature and is as important to the reading of fiction as to the reading of poetry or any other form of literature.

The atmosphere of a story is the dominant mood that is inspired in the reader regardless of whether the story is of "high quality" or "low quality" type material. Usually, the reader reacts to the story

according to the mood in which he is inspired. He may be happy, sad, sentimental, frightened or sympathetic.

"High quality" stories are always desirable reading materials. By recognizing the qualities of "low type" stories, readers are able to judge whether or not a story is of low or high quality. The "low quality" stories not only have very definite plot structure but rely on several stereotyped plot patterns. Plots deal more frequently with romantic love and crime than with any other subjects. Stories from "low quality" sources tend to resolve problems very conclusively and definitely. Endings are satisfyingly final. Coincidence and improbability often characterize the stories from "low quality" sources, though they are usually lost in a realistic framework. Physical action is paramount in the "low quality" stories, while the stories from "quality" sources often rely on psychological action. "low quality" stories, also, rely on character stereotypes.¹

¹Robie Macauley and George Lanning, Technique In Fiction (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 181.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction.--The general problem of this study was to analyze five short stories preferred by a group of high school juniors, giving specific consideration to the reactions of the students to the content. In the following sections each short story was approached in three ways: (1) a summary of the plot and content analysis was prepared by the writer of this thesis; (2) a report and interpretation of the students' reactions to the story were given; and (3) there is an interpretative summary wherein the results of the analysis and reactions were used as bases for identifying the elements which made this story appealing to these high school juniors.

General Method of Procedure.--From eight different anthologies in the English Department of Samuel Howard Archer High School, the writer selected twenty-five short stories, read, and annotated them. Thirty-five juniors at the school were asked to read the annotations and indicate on a separate sheet their first, second, third, fourth, and fifth choice of the stories included. (A copy of the annotations will be included in the Appendix.)

Table 1 shows the twenty-five short stories listed in descending order as chosen by the thirty-five juniors. The five short stories which received highest preference among the students were "The Far And The Near," written by Thomas Wolfe, "Joy Ride," written by Edith List, "There Will Come Soft Rains," written by Ray Bradbury, "By The Waters

TABLE 1

TITLES OF ANNOTATED SHORT STORIES AND TABULA-
TIONS OF CHOICES MADE BY THE THIRTY-
FIVE HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR STUDENTS

Selected Short Stories	Cumulative Frequency
"The Far and The Near"	17
"Joy Ride"	15
"There Will Come Soft Rains"	11
"The Ambitious Guest"	11
"By the Waters of Babylon"	11
"The Gift of the Magi"	10
"The Ransom of Red Chief"	9
"The Necklace"	9
"The Luck of Roaring Camp"	9
"Two Soldiers"	8
"As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap"	8
"The Most Dangerous Game"	7
"The Lady or the Tiger"	7
"The Tell-Tale Heart"	7
"The Masque of the Red Death"	6
"The Dry Rock"	6
"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"	5
"Early Marriage"	4
"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"	4
"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"	3

TABLE 1 (cont'd)

Selected Short Stories	Cumulative Frequency
"The Devil and Tom Walker"	3
"The Purloined Letter"	2
"The Devil and Daniel Webster"	2
"A Visit of Charity"	1
"Dive Right In"	0
Total Responses from thirty-five selected juniors	175

Of Babylon," written by Stephen Vincent Benet, and "The Ambitious Guest," written by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The students were asked to read the five short stories which received highest preference, and they they were asked to rate certain elements found in the various stories on a questionnaire. (A copy of questionnaire will be included in the Appendix.)

The writer did an objective analysis of each story and the following are the categories which were included: (1) theme, (2) characterization, (3) setting, and (4) action and conflict. The respective categories and questions follow:

Theme

1. What is the theme of the story?
2. Is the theme true to life?
3. Is the theme universal?

Characterization

1. Who is the main character?

2. What is the main character?
3. Is the action consistent with the character's traits?
4. What method does the author use to reveal the nature of the main character?
5. Who are the important minor characters, and what are their functions?
6. Do the characters seem to be individuals, or individualized types?
7. Is there any development in the main character?

Action

1. Does the action in the story develop the theme and follow logically from the nature of the characters?
2. Is the action physical, mental, or emotional?
3. What is the most important conflict in the story?
4. What kind of conflict is it?

Setting

1. What does the setting contribute to the total effect?
2. Is the setting a motivating force upon the characters?
3. Does the author weave the setting into the action?

It should be pointed out, that it was not necessary that every question under each category should receive a specific answer. This was true, if for no other reason than the fact that each question was not, in every instance, applicable to the particular story under examination.

The students' reactions to the stories were obtained through the use of a questionnaire-checklist and were given specific consideration according to the purposes of this study at the end of each story.

The Content Analysis of "The Far And The Near"

The Plot in the Story.--"The Far And The Near" is a short story written by Thomas Wolfe. The story tells of an engineer who for many years traveled over the same route on the railway. He saw during his twenty years of service many tragic events that happened on the rail. Many people were accidentally killed because they failed to move from the tracks when the train was approaching. His mind, however, was relieved of tragic thoughts when he passed a certain serene cottage located a short distance from a seemingly peaceful town. During his twenty years of service on the railway, this cottage represented to him friendliness, respect, hospitality, and brotherly love. There were two women who always waved to him when he blew the whistle as he passed this particular spot, and each day this act of friendliness strengthened his belief in their sincerity.

Upon retirement, the old engineer decided that he would like to meet the women who had shown him kindness at a distance for many years. He felt that he practically knew their very nature and in his mind the picture of the lovely and beautiful cottage and town lingered. When the engineer stopped from his train to seek out the women and cottage, the town looked completely different at a closer range. It had a run-down, dusty, cold and unfriendly air about it. The engineer suddenly felt downhearted and as he walked toward the cottage, he felt disappointed, but the thought of the women kept him from turning away.

At the cottage, the engineer was not cordially greeted, but suspiciously accepted into the sitting room. For a short period of time, he felt the uneasiness of being a stranger in the presence of two ugly and

distrustful women. After explaining why he had come, he left with a feeling of rejection.

The plot is highly sentimental, and this fact is brought out in the story through the actions of the engineer in seeking out the women who waved to him each day for twenty-years. It is, also, mysterious and suspenseful. The reader of the story cannot help wondering why the setting changes as the engineer enters it, and why the women become hesitant in accepting the old man into their home for a friendly visit.

Theme of the Story.--"The Far And The Near" is a short story with a theme which emphasizes the idea that many times that which appears beautiful and desirable when viewed from a distance may lose its appeal when it is viewed at a close range. In other words, the realities of life can shatter the beauty of the imagined ideal. Through a realistic treatment of life, the author of the story was able to emphasize his theme and point of view. For example, he used a true to life situation or setting of a town and two women who seemed to have been perfect examples of beauty, friendliness, and sincerity when they were viewed from a distance. When seen at close range, however, this setting and these characters symbolized all the ugliness and confusion of reality.

The theme was a true to life one because the author injected into it an idea of truth which people have recognized as existing for many years. It is true that when one views objects, cities or places from a distance, the eyes are not able to perceive the faults of the various settings. At close range, however, flaws are quickly noticeable. The same principle holds true when relationships between human beings occur. Frequently, when acquaintances are made and people come in close contact

with one another, the original conceptions and notions of people about people tend to change in one way or another. The theme was a universal truth. It may be applied to many different types of situations of life and people.

Characterization in the Story.--The main character in "The Far And The Near" was an engineer who had served faithfully on the railway until he reached the age of retirement. He may be termed as an individual character with distinct and vivid characteristics. First, he was a man who had experienced the sights of tragic events on the railway; however, he kept a sense of psychological balance during the experiences. Second, he was a man who displayed a quality of kindness. He showed this trait by responding to the act of friendliness which was indicated by the two women. He always waved back to them. Third, he showed honesty and humanity when he sought out the company of the women to thank them for their kind deeds to him through the past years. Last, the engineer developed or matured in the story. This maturity and development was exemplified when he realized that the things which sometimes seemed very pleasant in life could change into some ugly or grotesque situation when close contact was made. His development may, also, be seen through his recognition of what was real in life, and through his acceptance of reality. The traits possessed by the engineer were all wholesome as was his act of visiting the two women. The author of the story revealed the engineer's traits in the course of the narrative through the unfolding of the plot and the realistic treatment of life. The reader's final impression of the main character should be somewhat different from the initial one.

The minor characters in "The Far And The Near" may be termed as developing type characters. They were two women who seemed, at first, to be kind to the engineer. Their friendly gestures to him each day as his train passed their cottage indicated their kindness and sincerity; however, the hospitality shown in their home indicated the change from kindness to indifference. The author used these two minor characters in order to get over his point of view to the reader. The first was a view of them at a distance by the engineer, and the next, was a close look at them in the actual setting. Each time they presented totally different pictures in contrast of characters.

Action and Conflict in the Story.--The action in "The Far And The Near" helped to develop the author's theme; however, it was rather slow-moving. The author spent much time describing the setting and background for the story before he portrayed any action. Once the action was allowed to start, it reached a climax very quickly. When the engineer decided to pay his friends a visit, he lost no time in carrying out his desires and he proceeded to the town and cottage which presented a totally different picture to him than he had imagined.

The action may be considered as having been both, emotional and mental, for the conflict within the story developed from the mind of the old man. Once he reached the town, there developed within his mind a feeling of disgust and a sorrowfulness for having come. He further became confused because the original conception that he had of the setting changed into something distasteful. The psychological conflict was the dominant type of conflict within the plot.

Setting in the Story.--The setting in "The Far And The Near"

contributed greatly to the total effect of the story, and it was used as a device to motivate the actions of the main character. The author made two descriptions of the setting. First, he described the setting as a place which had an air of tidiness, thrift, and modest comfort. It was this first description that motivated a sense of sentimentalism within the mind of the engineer, thus causing him to seek out the women. Second, and last, the author described the setting as having become unfamiliar and a landscape of some ugly dream, and it was this second description that stimulated feelings of bewilderment, confusion, and disgust within the mind of the engineer.

Both descriptions of the setting symbolized two different things. The first when viewed at a far distance represented the beauty of life, and the second when viewed at a close range represented the ugliness and confusion of reality. It was this second representation that actually caused the engineer to come to terms with reality and to accept those things which could not be changed.

The setting was most important in "The Far And The Near," and next to the theme, it was the second most important element in the story. Actually, the author used the setting to present the theme and without it the theme would not have been so skillfully presented. It may be said that each depended upon the other for development within the story.

Students' Reaction to "The Far And The Near"

These descriptions of the reactions of the selected juniors to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them.

Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the character," and "appeal of story content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

"Highest in appeal"

"Average in appeal"

"Of no appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 2-6, these reactions are reported.

Elements of General Appeal.--The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "The Far And The Near" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or the setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning

TABLE 2
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO ELEMENTS OF
GENERAL APPEAL IN "THE FAR AND THE NEAR"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Vividness of Character	11	31	19	54	4	12	0	0	1	3
Realistic Treatment of Life	15	42	17	49	3	9	0	0	0	0
The Situation or the Setting	17	49	11	31	7	20	0	0	0	0
The Unfolding of the Plot	14	40	13	37	2	6	4	11	2	6
The General Timing of Events	11	31	12	34	6	17	3	9	3	9
The Effectiveness of the Beginning	16	46	9	26	7	20	3	9	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Ending	17	49	8	23	7	20	3	9	0	0

7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 2 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of "high" appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "the situation or the setting" and "the effectiveness of the ending," with 17, or 49 per cent, favoring the former and 17 or 49 per cent, favoring the latter.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such elements as "vividness of character," and "realistic treatment of life." The former received favor by 19 or 54 per cent of the students, and the latter received favor by 17 or 49 per cent of the group.

In the area of "no appeal," and/or absence of reactions to certain elements, it was observed that few students rated any of the elements as having fallen into these categories. The highest responses were made by 7 or 20 per cent in each of the following instances: "the situation or the setting," "the effectiveness of the beginning," and "the effectiveness of the ending."

In general, the students' ratings indicated that the elements were all found in the short story, however, they did not rate any one element as having appealed to a majority or high per cent of them at the same time. It was, also, evident that their reactions were in substantial agreement with the main elements of appeal identified in the content analysis.

The Appeal of Sex and Age.--The students were next asked, "What

TABLE 3

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF SEX AND AGE IN THE "FAR AND THE NEAR"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
A Male Character	19	54	14	40	1	3	1	3	0	0
A Female Character	6	17	12	34	11	31	6	17	0	0
A Younger Character	2	6	10	29	11	31	6	17	6	17
An Older Character	5	14	9	26	9	26	5	14	7	20

level of appeal did the character hold for you?" As shown in Table 3, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

With reference to high appeal, the students gave first preference to "a male character," and second preference to "a female character." One must take into account the personal predispositions of the reader. In the general inspection of the data, however, it became obvious that on the average, the subjects did not reject completely any of the characters on the basis of sex and age. Female and older characters ranged from "high" to "lacking" in appeal and might be classified as being more a matter of individual differences than a general group trend among the juniors. In the content analysis, it was suggested that an older male character would probably hold "high" appeal for the reader.

Appeal of Character Traits.--Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Passion of the character
6. Indifference of the character
7. Inhumanity of the character

8. Honesty of the character

Table 4 shows that none of these traits received a particularly high rating. From the standpoint of highest appeal, 19 or 54 per cent, of the students chose "kindness of the character, while 12 or 34 per cent, chose "sympathy of the character." It appeared that the first response substantiated the writer's prediction in the analysis.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found "honesty of the character," generally appealing.

There was "high" indication from the students that many of these traits did not appear in the story. It was evident that the students felt that there was "no evidence" of "greediness of the character," in the story, with 24 or 69 per cent of the group giving first place to the lack of this element in the story. Second place under "no evidence" was given to "inhumanity of the character," with 15 or 43 per cent of the students reacting against the element. The negative responses to these elements, indirectly, supported the writer's analysis of the story.

Distinguishing Features of the Character.--Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. The speech habits and patterns of the character
4. The description of the actions of the character

As shown in Table 5, the students gave first place to the "description of the character's appearance," and second place to "the description of the actions of the character." The former received favor by 19 or 54

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN "THE FAR AND THE NEAR"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Kindness of the Character	19	54	8	23	2	5	3	9	3	9
Greediness of the Character	0	0	3	9	2	5	6	17	24	69
Sympathy of the Character	8	23	11	31	4	11	4	11	8	23
Cruelty of the Character	12	34	7	20	3	9	1	3	12	34
Passion of the Character	9	26	7	20	4	11	3	9	12	34
Indifference of the Character	9	26	7	20	9	26	3	9	7	20
Inhumanity of the Character	4	11	14	40	1	3	1	3	15	43
Honesty of the Character	7	20	15	42	1	3	3	8	9	28

TABLE 5

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "THE FAR AND NEAR"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Description of Character's Appearance	19	54	12	34	2	6	2	6	0	0
Description of the Character's Mannerisms	10	29	11	31	8	22	2	6	0	0
The Speech Habits and Patterns of the Character	8	23	12	34	12	34	1	3	2	6
The Description of the Actions of the Character	16	46	14	40	3	9	2	5	0	0

per cent of the students, and the latter received favor by 16 or 46 per cent of the group.

On the average, the subjects did not reject any of the traits of the character, however, first place was given to "the description of the actions of the character" by 14 or 40 per cent of the group.

There were only 2 or 6 per cent of the juniors that indicated that there was "no evidence" of one of the traits of the character in the story. By the lack of response of the group, the writer felt that, in general, the students agreed with the content analysis.

Appeal of Story-Content.--Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" These story types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports and intense action
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 6, the responses to this question were quite inconsistent; however, the writer felt that they were important. In the range of high appeal, 16 or 46 per cent, of the students selected as first place, "sentiment" and 14 or 40 per cent gave second place to "mystery and suspense."

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they gave first place to "tragedy" and second place to "mystery and suspense."

TABLE 6

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF STORY-CONTENT IN "THE FAR AND THE NEAR"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Adventure	3	9	3	9	11	31	9	26	9	26
Humor	3	9	3	9	8	23	8	23	13	36
Mystery and Suspense	14	40	12	34	5	14	4	11	0	0
Sports and Intense Action	2	6	2	6	8	23	5	14	18	5
Sentiment	16	46	9	26	6	17	4	11	0	0
Romance	6	17	6	17	6	17	4	11	13	36
Tragedy	3	9	13	36	8	23	1	3	10	29

The former received favor by 13 or 36 per cent of the students, and the latter received favor by 12 or 34 per cent of the group.

There was high indication from the students that some of the types of story-content listed in the question did not appear in the short story. For example, 18 or 51 per cent of the group indicated that they felt that there was "no evidence" of "sports or intense action;" while 13 or 36 per cent felt, in both instances, that "humor" and "romance" were not in the story. In general, the students indicated, indirectly, that they agreed with the content analysis of the story.

Interpretive Summary of Students' Reactions to "The Far And The Near".--What were the appealing elements in "The Far And The Near?"

From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. A male character
3. Kindness of the character
4. Description of the character's appearance
5. Sentiment

In general, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed were in harmony with the students' reactions, although her analysis tended to give more weight to the theme and setting in the story than did the juniors.

The Content Analysis of "Joy Ride"

The Plot in the Story.--"Joy Ride" is a short story which was written by Edith List. Three different people or characters told their version of a tragedy which occurred after a high school prom. There were

teenagers involved in the tragic event. They did not know that a certain bridge in a road was out when they sped recklessly. None of them was alive after they crashed into the river. If they had only heeded the warning of the motorcycle patrolman and stopped speeding, they would have avoided the accident that cost them their lives.

Theme of the Story.--The theme in the story was one which is still quite common in today's world where rapid transportation is prominent and practically every family owns a car. It may be said to be that slogan which appears on the modern turnpikes and freeways of our country, "Slow Down and Live!" To preach to teen-agers about the dangers of reckless driving, to show them charts and figures of deaths and accidents resulting from reckless driving seldom has much effect. It is all too abstract for them to grasp; they are not able to identify themselves with the situation. This story does not preach, but its impact on adolescent readers should be effective. It is a story which portrays the theme by letting the characters experience the consequences of speeding.

Characterization.--The main characters in "Joy Ride" were a motorcycle patrolman, the operator of the bridge, and a motorist. Through the use of dialogue, the author had each character tell his version of the events preceding the tragedy. After each had given his point of view about the events preceding the tragedy, each gave his account of the crash and the vain attempts that were made to rescue the victims. The action that each took, when he realized what was about to happen, was characteristic of the type character that may sometimes be found in short stories. The policeman sounded his siren, the bridge-keeper blew his whistle, the motorist stopped to give a "helping hand."

The minor characters in "Joy Ride" played a most important part. They were the teenagers who caused the tragic action in the story. They do show an undesirable type of development in the story. At first, the reader may get the impression that they are a happy group, however, the last impression that the reader may receive will probably be one of sympathy.

Action in the Story.--The action found in the story seemed to have helped to develop the theme. Two types of action may be cited as having been in the story. First, there was mental action. The fast thinking of the patrolman and bridgekeeper may have saved the teenagers from their tragic fate if they had only heeded the warning. Second, there was physical action. The fact that the patrolman and the young motorist kept diving into the dark water and kept struggling with the dead bodies exemplified much physical action.

The most important conflict in the story was not physical conflict, but rather a conflict with fate and nature. It was inevitable that the teenagers met fate as well as death when their car plunged into the swollen dark water of the river.

Setting in the Story.--The setting in the story was very appropriate to the action. It served as the place which was a hazard to even the careful driver. The careless teenagers were certainly no exception. The setting was a bridge which let up when boats wanted to pass under it. This bridge was located around a curve, which meant that it was not in direct view of an approaching car. The setting was, actually, the motivating force upon the action in the story. Teenagers tend to like to read about tragic action in short stories. This story should have been

one that they would enjoy.

Students' Reactions to "Joy Ride".--These descriptions of the reactions of the selected juniors to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them. Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the characters," and "appeal of story content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

"Highest in appeal"

"Average in appeal"

"Limited in appeal"

"Of no appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 7-11, these reactions are reported.

Elements of General Appeal.--The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "Joy Ride" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis, there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal

TABLE 7

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO ELEMENTS
OF GENERAL APPEAL IN "JOY RIDE"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Vividness of Character	12	34	11	31	4	11	2	6	6	17
Realistic Treatment of Life	25	71	7	20	3	9	0	0	0	0
The Situation or the Setting	19	54	12	34	3	9	0	0	1	3
The Unfolding of the Plot	20	57	13	37	1	3	1	3	0	0
The General Timing of Events	12	34	17	49	6	17	0	0	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Beginning	17	49	13	36	2	6	3	9	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Ending	24	68	7	20	2	6	2	6	0	0

2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or the setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 7 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of "high" appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "realistic treatment of life," and "the effectiveness of the ending," with 25 or 71 per cent favoring the former and 24 or 68 per cent, favoring the latter.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such elements as "the general timing of events," "the unfolding of the plot," and "the effectiveness of the beginning."

In the area of "no appeal" and/or absence of reactions to certain elements, it was observed that few students rated any of the elements as having been lacking in the story. The highest response was made by 6 or 17 per cent, of the students, who expressed the opinion that "the general timing of events" in the story was limited.

The few reactions in the "no appeal" and "no evidence" categories were accepted as evidence that in general "Joy Ride" was appealing to these students and that their reactions placed them in substantial agreement with the main elements of appeal identified in the content analysis.

TABLE 8

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF SEX AND AGE IN "JOY RIDE"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
A Male Character	11	31	16	46	4	11	3	9	1	3
A Female Character	1	3	12	34	3	9	7	20	12	34
A Younger Character	4	11	8	23	5	14	2	6	16	46
An Older Character	1	3	14	40	4	11	6	17	10	29

The Appeal of Sex and Age.--The students were next asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" As shown in Table 8, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

With reference to "high" appeal, the students gave first place to "a male character" and second place to "a younger character." In the category of "average" appeal, the students gave first place, also, to "a male character" and second place to "an older character." One must take into consideration or account the personal predispositions of the reader. In the general inspection of the data, however, it became obvious that on the average, the subjects did not reject completely any of the characters on the basis of sex and age. Female and older characters ranged from "high" to "lacking" in appeal and might be classified as being more a matter of individual differences than a general group trend among the juniors. In the content analysis, it was suggested that an older male character would hold high appeal for the reader.

Appeal of Character Traits in the Story.--Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character

TABLE 9

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN "JOY RIDE"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Kindness of the Character	7	20	6	17	4	11	3	9	15	43
Greediness of the Character	2	6	2	6	1	3	1	3	29	83
Sympathy of the Character	2	5	6	17	9	26	3	9	15	43
Cruelty of the Character	4	11	5	14	9	26	3	9	14	40
Indifference of the Character	4	11	6	17	6	17	5	14	14	40
Inhumanity of the Character	11	31	8	23	9	26	2	6	5	14
Honesty of the Character	4	11	9	28	4	11	5	14	13	36

5. Indifference of the character
6. Inhumanity of the character
7. Honesty of the character

As indicated in Table 9, none of these traits received a particularly high rating. From the standpoint of highest appeal, "inhumanity of the character" was chosen by 11 or 31 per cent of the juniors. This response on this element was not in agreement with the content analysis. There was not any evidence of inhumanity in the short story. The characters were all very humane in their actions. They proved just how human they really were when they refused to give up the search for the bodies of the teenagers. Apparently, the students, who rated this element as having been "high" in appeal, did not take the time to notice the prefix, "in," placed before the root, "human," or they were very careless in checking their questionnaires.

The negative responses to these particular traits were "greediness of the character," which received 29 or 83 per cent of the group's favor, and "kindness of the character," and "sympathy of the character," which both received 15 or 43 per cent of the groups favor. The former received first place and the latter received second place. It is evident by the responses in this category that the students, by responding negatively, were in partial agreement with the writer's content analysis.

Distinguishing Features of the Character in the Story.--Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms

TABLE 10

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING
FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "JOY RIDE"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Description of the Character's Appearance	9	28	13	35	7	20	2	6	4	11
Description of the Character's Mannerisms	9	28	12	34	4	11	5	14	5	14
The Speech Habits and Patterns of the Character	9	28	10	29	5	14	4	11	7	20
The Description of the Actions of the Character	27	77	6	17	1	3	1	3	0	0

3. The speech habits and patterns of the character

4. The description of the actions of the character

Table 10 shows that from the standpoint of "high" appeal, the feature which received first place was "the description of the actions of the character," with 27 or 77 per cent of the selected group favoring it.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found "the description of the character's appearance" generally appealing.

There was a definite inconsistency in the responses of the group in the "no evidence" category. In three instances, several students failed to see any evidence of the first three traits in the characters. These traits were very evident as pointed out in the content analysis of this story. Generally, the students agreed to some extent with the analysis.

Appeal of Story-Content in the Story.--Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" These types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense actions
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 11, the students selected "tragedy" as having been first preference in the range of "high" appeal, with 34 or 99 per cent. Some of their responses, however, in answering the question were

TABLE 11

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF STORY-CONTENT IN "JOY RIDE"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Adventure	14	40	6	17	4	11	6	17	5	14
Humor	3	9	2	5	4	11	10	29	16	46
Mystery and Suspense	14	40	5	14	5	14	4	11	7	20
Sports or Intense Actions	17	49	5	14	3	9	5	14	5	14
Sentiment	7	20	8	23	9	26	6	17	5	14
Romance	3	9	1	3	7	20	4	11	20	57
Tragedy	34	99	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

rather inconsistent. For example, in the range of "high" appeal, 3 or 9 per cent of the group indicated that they preferred "humor" as the type of story-content in "Joy Ride." There was no evidence of any humor in the story.

In the area of "no appeal" and/or absence of reactions to certain types of story-content, it was observed that the students rated those types of story-content such as "humor" and "romance" as having been absent in the story. These reactions placed the students in agreement with the content analysis of the writer.

Interpretive Summary of Students' Reactions to "Joy Ride".--What were the appealing elements in "Joy Ride?" From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. Realistic treatment of life
2. A male character
3. Inhumanity of the character
4. The description of the actions of the character
5. Tragedy

In general, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed were in harmony with the students' reactions, except their selection of "inhumanity of the character." This selection probably grew out of a lack of understanding and comprehension of the term.

The Content Analysis of "By The Waters of Babylon"

The Plot in the Story.--"By the Waters of Babylon" is a short story written by Stephen Vincent Benet. It is a story of a boy who lived in

a primitive society. When he became of age, certain rituals were performed by his father and the boy was instructed through these rituals to take a journey which would test his maturity. He was instructed to keep in mind the tales and legends that his people held about the forest as he took the journey and to avoid the land of the gods.

During the ritual, the boy's father instructed him to look into the smoke and tell what he saw. Then, after the boy had described how the gods were dressed, his father threw the sticks three times and studied them as they fell. After the boy expressed his determination to go on with his plans in spite of the danger, his father touched him on the brest and forehead. Following these gestures he gave the boy a bow and three arrows; then with words of sober warning as well as of encouragement, sent him on his perilous journey.

Theme of the Story.-- The theme in "By The Waters of Babylon" suggests the present problems of the atom bomb, and human survival. Men may bring destruction to themselves because they have not yet learned to use their knowledge properly. Destruction can be averted by acquiring knowledge in all areas of human endeavor and by directing man's efforts to learning how to live and create rather than to destroy. The world today recognizes the fact that man's efforts to harness atomic power, and to reach beyond his own planet may result in too rapid scientific developments, and the world recognizes that men may destroy themselves by their eagerness to discover too quickly the great secrets of the universe.

After the boy had returned from his journey and had discussed it fully with his father he made the observation regarding the destroyed civilization: "Perhaps, in the old days, they ate knowledge too

fast."¹ The idea of this theme is prominent throughout the tragedy which makes it a true to life type situation. The world is searching for peace and proper use of atomic power.

Characterization in the Story.--The main character in "By The Waters of Babylon" was a young boy who was the son of a priest. He exemplified all of the qualities of a young, courageous male who was entering manhood. He was an intelligent young man who insisted on following his own mind rather than the superstitions of his primitive forefathers, and he was brave. At times he showed great fear, but his desire for knowledge overcame this obstacle. He showed superior intelligence over his fellow-men and primitive society by his courage to enter dead places and touch metal materials. Other incidents showing exceptional courage included his construction of the raft, knowing that the Forest People could have killed him as he worked; his passage across the river fully prepared for death, cold with fear, and singing his defiant death song and his behavior when confronted with the wild dogs. The boy was superstitious, but this was not a dominant quality in the character portrayal of him. His superstitions were in the forms of signs. The flying east of an eagle or an eagle, the three deer going east, and the white fawn going east were all signs to him and he thought that he must also go east to the place of the gods. His belief in signs led him to discover the past civilization of man. The boy showed a little wit in the story, especially when he tricked a pack of dogs that had very sensitive noses.

He was not without terror and fear on two occasions in the story.

¹Stephen Vincent Benet, "By The Waters of Babylon," Prose and Poetry For Appreciation, ed. Agnes L. McCarthy (New York: L. W. Singer Company, 1955), p. 67.

On the first occasion, he had just had his first glimpse of the destroyed city. Awed and terrified, he felt that he would turn back from such a fearful undertaking. The second occasion was when he came upon what he at first took to be a dead god sitting in his chair by a window. The boy did not let fear rule out reason for he said "It is better to lose one's life than one's spirit."¹ He really meant that it is better to lose one's life than one's integrity, dreams, ideals, standards, and beliefs.

Because the boy possessed such admirable traits and was portrayed as a likeable character in the story, the author has him to return to the primitive society and make plans to educate his people and rebuild the world of man.

The boy succeeded in everything he undertook during his journey. First, he expressed his determination to go on with his plans in spite of the danger that his father had warned him about. Next, he killed a panther with one shot, which showed his skill and bravery, and finally, he outwitted a pack of hungry dogs and entered the place of gods where he slept partially in fear and safety.

The author described the minor character as an old priest who was not afraid to touch the metal as his primitive followers were, and as a man who was wise enough to applaud his son's discovery, and to warn him to tell the people only a little at a time in order that they would believe him. The minor character recognized that people do not change in beliefs that have been prominent for centuries, and they do not change in a short span of time. The old priest did not hold back his

¹Ibid.

advice, but gave readily to his son.

While the boy may be termed as an individual type character because he possessed so many traits, he was, also, a developing character. His quest for knowledge supports this idea and his many traits enable him to secure knowledge. He went on his journey as an ignorant young boy, but returned as an educated man. The old man may be termed as a type character because throughout the story, he portrayed only one trait, wisdom.

Action and Conflict in the Story.--The action in "By The Waters of Babylon" helped to develop the theme and followed a logical order. First, the action began with the awesome way in which the father received the information of his son's dreams and the fear which the boy could not throw off even though he knew that he must go east to the place of the gods. As he spoke to his father about the dreams and the journey, his voice seemed strange to him. The action was intensified by the following incidents, which were both fearful and awesome: his encounter with the black panther; his first sight of the magic river, which caused him to kneel and pray; and his first glimpse of the place of the gods, which caused him to cover his face with his hands and to creep back into the forest.

The action may be termed as physical, psychological and emotional. The most important conflict was psychological because the boy had a mental desire to go against the teachings of his ancestors and to explore the forbidden land of the gods. The conflict is settled when he realized that the gods were not gods, but that they were men just as his people were.

Setting in the Story.--The setting was most important in "By The

Waters of Babylon." It was the motivating force upon the actions of the boy. It was, also, a place that the boy's ancestors had thought was covered by fogs and enchantments and occupied by gods. The boy discovered a different place. It was a city that had been destroyed by a frightful war, a war much as people visualize the next one to be like, with flaming atom bombs and radioactive fallout. The author tells the reader that the city was New York. The location was on a river.

Students' Reactions to "By The Waters of Babylon".--These descriptions of the reactions of the selected juniors to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them. Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the characters," and "appeal of story content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

"Highest in appeal"

"Average in appeal"

"Limited in appeal"

"Of no appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 12-16, these reactions are reported.

Elements of General Appeal.--The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "By The Waters of Babylon" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis, there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of

the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How die the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or the setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 12 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of "high" appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "vividness of character portrayal," and "the situation or the setting," with 19 or 54 per cent favoring the former and 17 or 49 per cent, favoring the latter.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such elements as "the general timing of events," and "the unfolding of the plot."

In the area of "no appeal" and/or absence of reactions to certain elements, it was observed that few students rated any of the elements as having been lacking in the story. The highest response was 9 or 26 per cent, of the students, who expressed the opinion that "the effectiveness

TABLE 12

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE ELEMENTS
OF GENERAL APPEAL IN "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Vividness of Character Portrayal	19	54	13	36	3	9	0	0	0	0
Realistic Treatment of Life	13	36	11	31	6	17	3	9	2	5
The Situation of the Setting	17	49	12	34	4	11	2	5	0	0
The Unfolding of the Plot	14	40	14	40	4	11	3	9	0	0
The General Timing of Events	10	29	22	63	2	5	1	3	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Beginning	11	31	12	34	9	26	3	9	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Ending	18	51	8	23	6	17	2	6	1	3

of the beginning" in the story was limited.

The few reactions in the "no appeal" and "no evidence" categories was accepted as evidence that, in general, "By The Waters of Babylon" was appealing to these students and that their reactions placed them in substantial agreement with the main elements of appeal identified in the content analysis.

The Appeal of Sex and Age.--The students were next asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" As shown in Table 13, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

In the area of "high" appeal, the students gave first place to "a male character," and second place to "a younger character." In the category of "average" appeal, the students gave first place to "an older character." One must take into consideration or account the personal predispositions of the reader. In the general inspection of the data, however, it became obvious that on the average, the subjects did not reject any of the characters on the basis of sex and age. There was no evidence of a female character in the story, and the students, for the most part, indicated on the questionnaires the absence of such a character in the story. In the content analysis, it was suggested that a younger character would hold high appeal for the reader..

Appeal of Character Traits in the Story.--Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the

TABLE 13

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF
SEX AND AGE IN "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
A Male Character	22	63	12	34	0	0	0	0	1	3
A Female Character	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	6	32	91
A Younger Character	14	40	7	20	1	3	3	9	10	28
An Older Character	12	34	16	45	2	6	2	6	3	9

portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Indifference of the character
6. Inhumanity of the character
7. Honesty of the character

As indicated in Table 14, none of these traits received a particularly high rating, however, "honesty of the character" received first place in the area of "high" appeal, with 22 or 63 per cent of the group's favor. This response was in agreement with the content analysis.

It was evident by the high number of indications by the students in "lacking" in appeal categories that many of the traits mentioned on the questionnaire were not exemplified by the character in the story. Some of these traits were: "greediness of the character," "cruelty of the character," "indifference of the character," and "inhumanity of the character." It was, also, evident by these responses in this category that responding negatively the students were in partial agreement with the writer's content analysis.

Distinguishing Features of the Character in the Story.--Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. The speech habits and patterns of the character

TABLE 14

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Kindness of the Character	15	43	7	20	4	11	1	3	8	23
Greediness of the Character	1	3	2	6	3	9	3	9	26	74
Sympathy of the Character	6	17	13	36	3	9	3	9	10	29
Cruelty of the Character	3	9	3	9	3	9	3	9	23	60
Passion of the Character	7	20	8	23	7	20	2	6	11	81
Indifference of the Character	4	11	5	14	6	17	16	17	14	14
Inhumanity of the Character	3	9	9	26	4	11	3	9	16	46
Honesty of the Character	22	63	7	20	2	5	1	3	3	9

4. The description of the actions of the character

Table 15 shows that from the standpoint of "high" appeal, the feature which received first place was "the description of the actions of the character," with 23 or 77 per cent of the selected group favoring it.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found "the description of the character's mannerisms" generally appealing. Generally, the students agreed with the content analysis of the story in regards to the feature of the character.

Appeal of Story-Content in the Story.--Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" These types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense actions
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 16, the students selected under "high" appeal "adventure" and "mystery and suspense" as the types of story-content found in "By The Waters of Babylon." The former received 21 or 60 per cent of the group's favor, and the latter received 19 or 54 per cent of the group's favor. It was evident in the foregoing analysis that both of these types of story-content were found in the story.

The students' negative responses were, for the most part, indications that they agreed with the content analysis, and indications that they

TABLE 15

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING
FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Description of the Character's Appearance	16	45	8	23	5	14	2	6	4	11
Description of the Character's Mannerisms	11	31	17	49	2	6	5	14	0	0
The Speech Habits and Patterns of the Character	13	36	11	31	7	20	2	6	2	6
The Description of the Action of the Character	23	65	10	29	0	0	1	3	1	3

TABLE 16

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF STORY-CONTENT IN "BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Adventure	21	60	9	26	4	11	0	0	1	3
Humor	3	9	3	9	7	20	7	20	1	3
Mystery and Suspense	19	54	9	26	5	4	2	5	0	0
Sports or Intense Action	3	9	11	31	6	17	4	11	11	31
Sentiment	1	3	9	26	11	31	3	9	11	31
Romance	1	3	1	3	3	9	1	3	29	83
Tragedy	6	17	14	40	5	14	0	0	10	29

recognized certain types of story-content and these types did not appear in the story.

Interpretive Summary of Students' Reactions to "By The Waters of Babylon".--From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. A male character
3. Honesty of the character
4. Description of the action of the character
5. Adventure

Generally, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed were in harmony with the students' reactions to the story.

The Content Analysis of "There Will Come Soft Rains"

The Plot in the Story.--"There Will Come Soft Rains" is a short story written by Ray Bradbury. It is a story which presented a description of automation. There were no human character involved in the plot. There was a house which stood amidst smoldering ashes and debris. This house was in perfect condition and all of its mechanical devices were run by a voice-clock which kept the time. There were robots that went over the house dusting, washing dishes, cooking, running bath water, washing clothes, ironing and playing records. There were a door and windows that opened and closed according to the temperature of the weather. It was a house which had all the conveniences of modern day life, but there was one peculiarity about it, there were no human beings to

enjoy the luxuries which the house afforded. All of the things which had been created for man's enjoyment were functioning without man.

There was an indication in the story that happiness and contentment had once been exhibited around the house. There appeared on the exterior wall silhouettes of a man, a woman, and children. The family, apparently, had occupied the house and used the mechanical devices found in the house before an atomic bomb attack. The atomic blast seemed to have blown the family through the wall, and with the family dead, the house was left, solely, to be run by robots. These robots were so thorough, in their job, that when an old dog died in the front room, they quickly sent him away to the incinerator.

The house was destroyed in the end of the story. A bottle of cleaning fluid started the fire when a gust of wind blew it over in the kitchen sink. The total house was practically demolished within an hour of time. The robots were not equipped to exterminate the fire. The story was highly fictitious which should have been a motivation for the reader.

Theme in the Story.--The theme in "There Will Come Soft Rains" may be related to the author's concern about the way men use their scientific knowledge. Mankind has the power to make life more pleasant and comfortable than ever before; at the same time it has power to destroy all life. All depends upon the way man uses his scientific knowledge.

Characterization in the Story.--In "There Will Come Soft Rains" through the use of description, the author lets the reader know that all of the people have been destroyed by an atomic explosion. He further, used robots to serve as characters. These robots could be termed as type characters because they possessed only one trait throughout the story. They were either a maid, a cook, or a butler in the story. These

robots were able to carry out their job, but when a difficult situation arose, they were not able to think critically and solve the problem. For example, when the fire started, only those robots, whose duties were to act as firemen, participated in the extinguishing of the fire. The rest were at a complete loss of what to do.

Teenagers like science-fiction type reading materials, and the robot is a favorite character of theirs. The fact that this was a story which was full of automation should have been a motivating force upon the students to read.

Action in the Story.--The action in the story was characteristic of automation. All of the devices performed assigned jobs or chores within the house. Some cleaned at their appointed time, some cooked, and some prepared beds for the night which were never slept in.

The final action came when a fire started in the kitchen of the house. The robots tried desperately to stop it, but were not successful in their attempts. This fire destroyed them and their domain.

The action in the story helped to develop the author's theme. All of the devices that man had created to make life easy for himself were left to do their jobs without man to enjoy them. All of the action was physical and helped to settle the conflict within the story. In the end, a natural conflict developed and although the robots tried to eliminate it, they failed to overcome it. Thus, nature ran her course.

Setting in the Story.--The setting in "There Will Come Soft Rains" was quite appropriate and contributed greatly to the total effect of the story. First, the story was told within a period of twenty-four hours, and next, the plot of the story evolved around the setting.

The setting was a house equipped with various mechanical devices which served to make life easy for mankind. There was a voice-clock which sang out the time of the day, indicating the order in which things should happen. When the clock announced the time and the chore to be accomplished, the robots would swing into action and do their work. It seemed as if the action and the setting were motivating forces upon each other.

Although "There Will Come Soft Rains" was a story which indicated a high amount of tragedy in the plot, the setting and the theme are really the dominant elements in it.

Students' Reactions to "There Will Come Soft Rains".--These descriptions of the reactions of the selected juniors to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them. Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the character," and "appeal of story-content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

"Highest in appeal"

"Average in appeal"

"Limited in appeal"

"Of no appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 17-21, these reactions are reported.

Elements of General Appeal.--The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "There

Will Come Soft Rains" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis, there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or the setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 17 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of "high" appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "the situation or the setting" and "the effectiveness of the ending," with 18 or 51 per cent favoring the former and 14 or 40 per cent, favoring the latter.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such elements as "the general timing of events," "the effectiveness of the beginning," and "the unfolding of the plot."

TABLE 17

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE ELEMENTS OF
GENERAL APPEAL IN "THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Vividness of Character Portrayal	6	17	4	11	1	3	4	11	20	57
Realistic Treatment of Life	6	17	7	20	8	23	4	11	10	29
The Situation or the Setting	18	51	9	26	6	17	0	0	2	6
The Unfolding of the Plot	11	29	11	31	9	26	3	9	2	5
The General Timing of Events	11	31	17	49	5	14	1	3	1	3
The Effectiveness of the Beginning	11	31	13	37	6	17	2	6	3	9
The Effectiveness of the Ending	14	40	8	23	8	23	2	5	3	9

In the area of "no evidence" of certain elements in the story, 20 or 57 per cent of the students gave first place to the "vividness of character portrayal," and 10 or 29 per cent of them gave second place to "realistic treatment of life." Generally, the students were in agreement with the content analysis of the writer.

The Appeal of Sex and Age.--The students were next asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" As shown in Table 18, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

The majority of the students were in agreement with the content analysis of the writer which indicated there that was no evidence of sex and age in "There Will Come Soft Rains."

Appeal of Character Traits in the Story.--Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Indifference of the character
6. Inhumanity of the character
7. Honesty of the character

TABLE 18

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF SEX AND AGE IN "THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
A Male Character	1	3	2	6	0	0	1	3	31	89
A Female Character	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	32	91
A Younger Character	1	3	2	6	1	3	0	0	31	89
An Older Character	0	0	1	3	1	3	0	0	33	94

TABLE 19

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF
CHARACTER TRAITS IN "THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Kindness of Character	0	0	1	3	1	3	0	0	33	94
Greediness of Character	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	6	31	89
Sympathy of the Character	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	33	94
Cruelty of the Character	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	32	91
Passion of the Character	2	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	30	86
Indifference of Character	4	12	3	9	0	0	0	0	23	66
Inhumanity of Character	8	23	2	5	1	3	3	9	21	60
Honesty of the Character	2	5	1	3	3	9	2	5	27	77

As indicated in Table 19, none of these traits received a particularly high rating. This was due to the fact that the students realized that robots really are not human beings and do not possess the same qualities as humans. Most of the students indicated that there was "no" evidence of human traits in "There Will Come Soft Rains."

Distinguishing Features of the Character in the Story.--Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. The speech habits and patterns of the character
4. The description of the actions of the character

Table 20 shows that the responses of the students were quite inconsistent, however, the majority of the students indicated there was "no evidence" of the features mentioned in the question.

Appeal of Story-Content in the Story.--Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following types of story-content appeal to you?" These types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense actions
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 21, the students selected "tragedy" as having

TABLE 20

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN
"THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Description of the Character's Appearance	11	31	4	11	2	5	0	0	18	51
Description of the Character's Mannerisms	5	14	4	11	2	5	2	5	22	63
The Speech Habits and Patterns of the Character	5	14	5	14	1	3	2	5	22	63
The Description of the Action of the Character	12	34	6	17	2	5	0	0	15	43

TABLE 21

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF
STORY-CONTENT IN "THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Adventure	6	17	2	5	5	14	4	11	18	51
Humor	6	17	8	23	4	11	5	14	12	34
Mystery and Suspense	12	34	10	29	5	14	3	9	5	14
Sports or Intense Actions	4	11	5	14	5	14	7	20	14	40
Sentiment	1	3	2	5	7	20	7	20	18	51
Romance	2	5	1	3	2	5	5	14	25	71
Tragedy	18	51	10	29	0	0	2	5	5	14

been first preference in the range of "high" appeal, with 18 or 51 per cent. Their second choice in this category was "mystery and suspense," with 12 or 34 per cent favoring it. These indications were in agreement with the writer's content analysis.

In the area of "no appeal" and/or absence of reactions to certain types of story-content, it was observed that the students rated those types of story-content such as "adventure," "humor," "sports or intense actions," "sentiment," and "romance" as having been absent from the short story.

Interpretive Summary of Students' Reactions to "There Will Come Soft Rains".--What were the appealing elements in "There Will Come Soft Rains?" From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. The situation or the setting
2. Tragedy

In general, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed were in harmony with the students' reactions. One must point out the fact that many of the elements included on the questionnaire did not appear in "There Will Come Soft Rains."

The Content Analysis of "The Ambitious Guest"

The Plot in the Story.--"The Ambitious Guest" is a short story written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The story tells us of a family that lived on a dangerous side of a mountain and enjoyed the communion of being together on cold winter nights. One particular night, however, as the family sat around their glowing fire, a stranger entered their home.

They accepted the stranger, a young man, into their circle and the teenage daughter almost fell in love with the young guest.

The stranger told the family of his ambitions in life and they listened attentively. They, in turn, related their experiences of the past and ambitions of the future to the guest. They became so engrossed in their merry-making through conversation that when they heard a loud rumbling noise, they all ran out of the house into the path of a mountain-slide. In the past, this family had prepared for their safety in case of such an event, however, during this particular night, they forgot to listen to see in which direction the slide was headed before they attempted to take cover. Their mistake was due, partially, to the fact that their minds were filled with fantasy rather than the realities of life. Imagination had taken full control of their senses.

The story is a tragic one, however, it should have been enjoyable reading for teenagers, especially since they tend to like story content which exemplifies much tragedy.

Theme of the Story.--The theme of "The Ambitious Guest" suggests that when one dreams of great ambitions, one sometimes forgets the realistic things of life during the moments of his dreams. This theme may be applied in different situations of everyday life. As far as the story is concerned, the theme is not the dominant element, but it is pointed up by the actions of the characters.

Characterization.--The main character in the story was a young ambitious male guest. He was an individual character and exemplified several traits in the story. First, he was proud and haughty, but gentle in spirit, and was ready to associate with the lowly people who lived

in the cottage. Next, he showed kindness with the whole family, which caused them to talk freely of their ambitions and feelings as if he belonged to their mountain society. Finally, he acted as a brother or a son at the fireside of the poor man's fireside. All of these traits of the character were portrayed by the author through use of the narrative-descriptive method.

The minor characters in the story were all members of the family that lived in the mountain area. First, there was the father who was stimulated by the guest to dream of a better living environment for his family, Second, there was the mother who showed interest in the ambitions of the guest, but who relied upon the father's explanations for interpretations of their meanings, and who sensed an unfamiliar strangeness about the night. Next, there was the grandmother who was content with life, but who had certain desires and wishes which she hoped would be granted to her after death. She wanted someone to place a mirror over her corpse in order that she might see if her bonnet was straight before being committed to her grave. Fourth, there was the young daughter who almost fell in love with the guest, because she was lonesome for the attention of the opposite sex. Last, there were the children who, after listening to the conversations of the adults, decided that they wanted to pay a visit to a special brook deep in the mountain for fun and frolic during the middle of the night. These characters were all considered to have been "type" characters by the writer. They showed only one trait, and their functions were to point up the family.

Action in the Story.--The action in the story developed the theme. Because the characters were so involved in daydreaming, they failed to

remember the danger of their environment.

There were both, physical and natural conflict presented in "The Ambitious Guest." The physical action stemmed from the guest's and the family's fleeing from the mountain slide, and the mental conflict stemmed from the desires and ambitions of each character in the story. The most important conflict, however, was the mental conflict of the characters. Each had different desires as shown in the foregoing characterization in the story.

Setting in the Story.--The setting in "The Ambitious Guest" was the motivating element which caused the tragic action in the story. Because the setting was a dangerous mountain scene, it stimulated the action which caused the natural conflict involving the mountain slide and the fatal death of the characters in the story. The timing of events in the story depended on the setting and its natural forces as well as is the physical action.

Students' Reactions to "The Ambitious Guest".--These descriptions reactions of the selected juniors to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them. Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the characters," and "appeal of story-content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

"Highest in appeal"

"Average in appeal"

"Limited in appeal"

"Of no appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 22-26, these reactions are reported.

Elements of General Appeal.--The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "The Ambitious Guest" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis, there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or the setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 22 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of "high" appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "vividness of character portrayal," and, both, "the situation or the setting," and "the effectiveness of the

TABLE 22

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO ELEMENTS
OF GENERAL APPEAL IN "THE AMBITIOUS GUEST"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Vividness of Character Portrayal	20	57	15	43	0	0	0	0	0	0
Realistic Treatment of Life	10	28	17	49	6	17	1	3	1	3
The Situation or the Setting	14	40	16	46	4	11	1	3	0	0
The Unfolding of the Plot	11	31	15	43	6	17	1	3	0	0
The General Timing of Events	7	20	20	57	6	17	2	6	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Beginning	7	20	12	34	11	31	5	14	0	0
The Effectiveness of the Ending	14	40	16	46	2	5	3	9	0	0

ending," tied for second place with the group. The former received 20 or 57 per cent favor by the group of juniors, and latter, in both instances, received 14 or 40 per cent.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in all of the elements listed in the question.

In the area of "no appeal" and/or absence of reactions to certain elements, it was observed that few students rated any of the elements as having been lacking in "The Ambitious Guest." The highest response was made by 11 or 31 per cent, of the students, who expressed the opinion that "the effectiveness of the beginning" in the story was limited.

The few reactions in the "no appeal" and "no evidence" categories were accepted as evidence that in general "The Ambitious Guest" was appealing to these students and that their reactions placed them in substantial agreement with the main elements of appeal identified in the content analysis.

The Appeal of Sex and Age.--The students were next asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" As shown in Table 23, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

With reference to "high" appeal, the students gave first place to "a male character" and second place to "a female character." The former received 16 or 46 per cent of the group's favor, and the latter received

TABLE 23

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING IN THE APPEAL
OF SEX AND AGE IN "THE AMBITIOUS GUEST"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
A Male Character	16	46	17	48	1	3	1	3	0	0
A Female Character	15	42	16	46	3	9	1	3	0	0
A Younger Character	9	26	16	46	7	20	2	5	1	3
An Older Character	11	31	16	46	4	11	2	6	2	6

15 or 42 per cent of their favor. Only three students indicated that there was "no evidence" of any of the characters mentioned in the question in the story. One must take into consideration or account the personal predispositions of the reader. In the general inspection of the data, however, it became obvious that on the average, the subjects did not reject completely any of the characters on the basis of sex and age. Female and older characters ranged from "high" to "lacking" in appeal and might be classified as being more a matter of individual differences than a general group trend among the juniors. In the content analysis, it was suggested that all of the characters would hold high appeal for the reader.

Appeal of Character Traits in the Story.--Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Indifference of the character
6. Inhumanity of the character
7. Honesty of the character

As indicated in Table 24, the "kindness of the character" received first place in the area of "high" appeal. This was indicated by the responses of 20 or 57 per cent of the group of students. These responses were, also, in agreement with the content analysis.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the

TABLE 24

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN "THE AMBITIOUS GUEST"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Kindness of the Character	20	57	10	29	2	5	3	9	0	0
Greediness of the Character	1	3	4	11	4	11	26	74	0	0
Sympathy of the Character	4	11	15	43	4	11	4	11	8	23
Cruelty of the Character	1	3	1	3	3	9	6	17	24	69
Passion of the Character	2	6	12	34	9	26	2	6	10	28
Indifference of the Character	4	11	8	23	6	17	2	5	15	43
Inhumanity of the Character	1	3	2	6	7	20	4	11	21	60
Honesty of the Character	12	34	14	40	4	11	1	3	4	11

students had a fair level of interest in such elements as "sympathy of the character," "honesty of the character," and "passion of the character."

As indicated in Table 24, the students selected as first place in the "no evidence" category "cruelty of the character," and they gave second place to "inhumanity of the character," with 24 or 69 per cent of the group favoring the former, and 21 or 60 per cent favoring the latter. These negative responses indicated that the students were in further agreement with the writer's content analysis.

Distinguishing Features of the Character in the Story.--Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. The Speech habits and patterns of the character
4. The description of the actions of the character

Table 25 shows that from the standpoint of "high" appeal, the feature which received first place was "the description of the actions of the character," with 13 or 37 per cent of the selected group favoring it.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found "the description of the character's appearance" generally appealing.

The majority of the students indicated that they did have a knowledge of character traits by responding to all of the categories and items listed in the question. The content analysis pointed up the actions of various characters within the story.

TABLE 25

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER
IN "THE AMBITIOUS GUEST"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Description of the Character's Appearance	11	31	17	49	6	17	1	3	0	0
Description of the Character's Mannerisms	12	34	12	34	7	20	1	3	3	9
The Speech Habits and Patterns of the Character	13	37	12	34	2	5	2	5	3	9
The Description of the Actions of the Characters	14	40	14	40	7	20	0	0	1	3

100

Appeal of Story-Content in the Story.--Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" These types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense actions
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 26, the students selected "tragedy" as having been first preference in the range of "high" appeal, with 20 or 57 per cent showing this favor.

The reactions to story-content in "The Ambitious Guest" were in agreement with the content analysis. The story did contain all of the types of story-content as listed in the question. It was the readers' choices to rate each type according to the level of appeal that he chose. The content analysis gave more emphasis to "tragedy" in this short story and the juniors seemed to have been in agreement with the writer.

Interpretive Summary of Students' Reactions to "The Ambitious Guest"--

What were the appealing elements in "The Ambitious Guest?" From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. A male character
3. Kindness of the character
4. Description of the actions of the character

TABLE 26

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL
OF STORY-CONTENT IN "THE AMBITIOUS GUEST"

Characteristics	Levels of Appeal									
	High		Average		Limited		No Appeal		No Evidence	
	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent	Student Number	Per Cent
Adventure	2	5	6	17	9	28	3	9	15	43
Humor	3	9	5	14	6	17	7	20	14	40
Mystery and Suspense	8	23	13	37	6	17	3	9	5	14
Sport and Intense Action	2	5	6	17	7	20	4	11	16	46
Sentiment	5	14	11	31	5	14	2	6	12	34
Romance	7	20	5	14	8	23	3	9	12	34
Tragedy	20	57	12	34	1	3	1	3	1	3

5. Tragedy

In general, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed were in harmony with the students' reactions.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary.--In the outset of this study, the writer pointed out that the importance of reading in today's world cannot be stressed too much and the selecting of proper reading materials for students cannot be overlooked.

The writer suggested that the short story be explored as a possible means of motivating reading interest. This suggestion was made because of the wide variety of subjects treated in this type of literature and because of its easy accessibility. With this in mind, the study was made.

This study was an intensive content analysis of high school juniors who were in attendance at Samuel Archer High School, Atlanta, Georgia, 1965-66.

The investigation proposed to determine the appealing elements in five short stories which might account for their being preferred by high school juniors. More specifically, this investigation had several purposes. First, it sought to determine what five short stories of the twenty-five used in the study were most preferred by the selected group of high school juniors. Second, it proposed to characterize these short stories in terms of setting, plot, and types of conflict, climax, theme, atmosphere and quality. Third, it was designed to ascertain those elements prevalent in the stories which held high appeal for the students. Next and finally, it was designed to determine what the reactions of the group were to the five short stories.

This study was made during the second semester, 1965-66, at the Samuel Howard Archer High School. The procedure involved several steps which are discussed below.

Having surveyed related literature, the writer secured permission from Dr. Jarvis Barnes, Assistant in the Research and Development Department, Atlanta Board of Education, to use a group of juniors at the Samuel Howard Archer High School; the writer read and annotated twenty-five short stories and presented them to her adviser for criticisms, extensions and deletions; the writer made and distributed questionnaires to the selected students; the writer made a content analysis of each story, and assembled and interpreted data.

The related literature pertinent to this study revealed that there had been many studies made in the area of content analysis. The literature related to this problem dwelt with these four factors: (1) the importance of interest in selection of reading materials; (2) methods of determining reading preferences; (3) survey of related problems dealing with content analysis; (4) the short story as a means of developing interest in and concern about reading among adolescent students.

Studies showed that there was an increasing recognition, on the part of all, of the role played in learning and habit formation by the factor of interest. However, there was much diversity among the authorities as to which selections young adults genuinely enjoyed. The most frequent methods used to determine reading preferences were: (1) questionnaires; (2) checklists; and (3) inventories.

There were limitations inherent in this study. First, this study was limited to thirty-five juniors who attended Samuel Howard Archer

High School during the 1965-66 school term. Next, the students had had very little instruction in the short story and most of their answers seemed to have grown out of their own experiences. Third, the selections of short stories were determined by the writer. Finally, all of the stories used were written in prose, and they were all selected from high school literature anthologies.

Basic Findings of the Study.--As a result of the analysis and student reactions to each story chosen for this study, the following findings are reported:

A content analysis of "The Far And The Near" suggested that there were numerous appealing elements. These were: (1) the effectiveness of the ending was preferred by 17 or 49 per cent of the group; (2) a male character received favor by 19 or 54 per cent; (3) kindness of the character was favored by 19 or 54 per cent; (4) description of the character's appearance received favor by 19 or 54 per cent; and (5) sentiment was preferred by 16 or 46 per cent of the group.

Next, a content analysis of "Joy Ride" indicated the following appealing elements: (1) realistic treatment of life was preferred by 25 or 71 per cent of the juniors; (2) a male character received favor by 11 or 31 per cent; (3) inhumanity of the character was, also, preferred by 11 or 31 per cent; (4) the description of the actions of the character received favor by 27 or 77 per cent; and (5) tragedy in the story-content was preferred by 34 or 99 per cent of the juniors.

Still yet, a content analysis of "By The Waters of Babylon" revealed the following: (1) vividness of character portrayal was preferred by 19 or 54 per cent of the group; (2) a male character received favor by 22

or 63 per cent; (3) honesty of the character was preferred by 22 or 63 per cent; (4) description of the actions of the character was favored by 23 or 65 per cent; and (5) adventure in the story-content was preferred by 21 or 60 per cent of the juniors.

Next, a content analysis of "There Will Come Soft Rains" indicated the following: (1) the situation or the setting was preferred by 18 or 51 per cent of the group; and (2) tragedy in the story-content was favored by 18 or 51 per cent.

Finally, a content analysis of "The Ambitious Guest" revealed: (1) vividness of character portrayal was favored by 20 or 57 per cent of the juniors; (2) a male character received the favor of 16 or 46 per cent; (3) kindness of the character was preferred by 20 or 57 per cent; (4) the description of the actions of the character received favor by 14 or 40 per cent; and (5) tragedy in the story-content was preferred by 20 or 57 per cent of the group.

In summary, from the twenty-five short stories used in this study, the five most preferred were: (1) "The Far And The Near" written by Thomas Wolfe, (2) "Joy Ride" written by Edith List, (3) "By The Waters Of Babylon" written by Stephen Vincent Benet, (4) "There Will Come Soft Rains" written by Ray Bradbury, and (5) "The Ambitious Guest" written by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Conclusions.--From the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The students' choices of "The Far And The Near," "Joy Ride," "By The Waters Of Babylon," "There Will Come Soft Rains," and "The Ambitious Guest," were relatively wide in variety, generally in accord with the timelessness of certain themes, and seemingly discriminative in quality of authorship.

2. With regard to characterization of the short stories, the researcher concluded from the analyses that the stories were similar in vividness of character portrayal, frequently in agreement in; and only occasionally indicative of action and tragedy found on the American scene.
3. On a whole, the subjects reacted quite favorably to these stories, however, it was indicated through their reactions that they had not taken this study seriously, therefore, the researcher was hesitant about placing too much value on certain responses to some of the questions.
4. Although many indicated that they liked the stories, they were not able to state any reasons for liking them.

Implications.--As a result of this study, the following implications were drawn:

1. Because of lack of training in the short story techniques, many students were not able to respond intelligently to the questions asked.
2. Adolescents do not read one type of short story, either of the love, the mystery, adventure, or humorous kind; they read and like many types for many different reasons.
3. Students' preferences of short stories sometimes, can be understood only in terms of the individual story.
4. It is difficult to distinguish whether some readers are drawn to a particular short story because they identify themselves with the characters, or because for them, the stories are a means to escape their daily problems. Students tend to read to

derive different kinds of satisfactions from the same story.

5. The quality of vividness in characters, actions, and male characters would appear to rank high with high school juniors.

Recommendations.--The recommendations which are made here should be applied to the high school level since that was the level on which this study was made.

1. Any study involving student reactions to preferred short stories would best be undertaken after the subjects being studied had had some instructions in this particular type of literature.
2. It would be better to introduce the short story early in the school year, as a means of motivating reading interests of adolescents.
3. Further study should be done in this area, particularly the following:
 - A. The reading interests of high school juniors.
 - B. Content analysis of short stories preferred by high school freshmen.
 - C. A comparison of reading interests of boys and girls in the junior class.
 - D. A follow-up study and comparison of the reading interests of high school freshmen and seniors.
 - E. A similar study under more controlled conditions.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REACTIONS TO SHORT STORIES

To The Student

This questionnaire is designed to find out why you like a certain short story. If you will answer to the best of your ability you will be helping in a specific research study and also providing more information about the kinds of stories that appeal to students your age and interest levels. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

The following questions are divided into two main sections which have directions preceding them. Please be certain that you understand what you are to do.

Section I.--In the first set there are several items listed under most of the questions. In each instance you are asked to rate them by placing numbers or an "X" in the parentheses. The ratings have the following meanings:

"3" indicates "Highest in Appeal"

"2" indicates "Average in Appeal"

"1" indicates "Limited in Appeal"

"0" indicates "No Appeal"

"X"; indicates "No Evidence of Such was in the story"

You may use a given number more than once in responding to the same list of items. Similarly, you may use an "X" whenever you do not recognize a given characteristic within a short story.

Name of the story _____

Have you read this story before? Yes _____ No _____.

1. How did the following elements appeal to you?

(Remember that a given number or the "X" may be used as often as you wish.)

Vividness of character portrayal ()

Realistic treatment of life ()

The situation or the setting ()

The unfolding of the plot ()

The general timing of events ()

The effectiveness of the beginning ()

The effectiveness of the ending ()

2. What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?

A male character ()

A female character ()

A younger character ()

An older character ()

3. Did the sex of the character have any bearing on your choice?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Thinking now, in terms of how well the author did the character portrayal, how do you rate his description of any one or all of these traits?

Kindness of the character ()

Greediness of the character ()

Sympathy of the character ()

Cruelty of the character ()

Passion of the character ()

Indifference of the character ()

Inhumanity of the character ()

Honesty of the character ()

5. How would you rate the author's use of these traits in bringing out the description of the character of characters?

Description of the character's appearance ()

Description of the character's mannerisms ()

The speech habits and patterns of the character ()

The description of the actions of the character ()

6. How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?

Adventure ()

Humor ()

Mystery and suspense ()

Sports or Intense action ()

Sentiment ()

Romance ()

Tragedy ()

7. Do you remember basing your selection of the story on a given type as listed in number 6? Yes_____ No_____.

8. If so, which type had most appeal?_____.

Section II.--In this section of the questionnaire you are requested to respond to these questions by the use of check marks_____or by filling in answers in spaces provided.

9. Which of the following descriptions describes the atmosphere of the story? (1) comical_____ (2) sad_____ (3) suspenseful_____. Please list any other adjective which seems more accurate. _____

10. Was your emotional response to the story affected by its atmosphere? Yes _____ No _____
11. Was the main character a villain _____, a hero _____ or neither of these _____? (Please check one.)
12. What did you like most about this story? _____

13. What did you dislike about the story? _____

14. Was the story very easy _____, normal _____, or difficult _____ to read?
15. Was the story worth-while reading? Yes _____ No _____
16. Would you recommend it to a friend? Yes _____ No _____
17. If you would recommend it, what would you say if he or she asked why you think it is a good story to read? _____

- 1

¹ Billye Suber Williams, "Content Analyses of Five Short Stories Preferred By A Group of College Freshmen" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of English, Atlanta University), p. 103.

Write the title of each story in order of preference in the spaces below.

First choice _____

Second choice _____

Third choice _____

Fourth choice _____

Fifth choice _____

The following are twenty-five annotated short stories. Read each annotation carefully. Then, decide which five out of twenty-five given you like best. In the space after each story indicate first, second, third, fourth, fifth, choice of five stories.

Adventure Stories

1. "Early Marriage" - Conrad Richter

Although Nancy Belle knew that the Apaches were murdering white settlers and that her Uncle Gideon had not arrived at the appointed time to relieve Asa, she was determined to meet Stephen in Gunstock. Therefore, she hitched her horse and buggy, and along with Rife, she set out to keep her wedding date.

2. "Two Soldiers" - William Faulkner

When Pete left the farm to go to the army, his little nine year old brother decided to follow him. The young boy managed to get to the big city without any money in his pockets. While wandering around, he discovered that Pete was about to be shipped off to war. This discovery increased his anxiety to follow his big brother and got him into a "world of trouble" with the army.

3. "The Most Dangerous Game" - Richard Cornell

Whitney and Rainsford had just settled down for the night when gun shots were heard. Rainsford got up and leaned from the rail of their boat to listen for more shots. Unfortunately, he fell overboard and he had to swim to the nearest island. He was taken into the home of a most unhospitable host, General Zaroff, who suggested that they should play the most dangerous game. Rainsford decided

to play the game because he didn't want the big Cossack, Ivan, to throw him to the wolves.

4. "The Ransom Of Red Chief" - O. Henry

When Bill and Sam kidnapped ten year old Red Chief, they bargained for more than they could bear. Little Red Chief turned out to be a brat, who savagely kicked Bill, and even tried to scalp him. Red Chief was so notorious when he played that even his own father refused to pay a ransom for him. Bill and Sam has to make a decision, and they did.

5. "By The Waters Of Babylon" - Stephen Vincent Benet

A young prince leaves his people and takes a journey into a strange land which he at first thinks is the land of the gods. As he explores the buildings, books and remnants of a past civilization, he discovers that the gods were not gods, but that they were men who lived probably during the twentieth century.

6. "As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap" - Jesse Stuart

It was very hard work for Winn and Shan to sow Old Jeff's strawberry patch with weed seeds, but they were determined to get even with their neighbors. Winn was angry because Tom and Eddie had beat him, and Shan was angry because Old Jeff would not allow him to court his pretty daughter, Martha. When the mad dog ran them out of the strawberry patch, they almost broke their necks in two ways.

7. "Dive Right In" - B. J. Chute

The biggest event of the summer was the diving match between Camp Timberlake and Camp Playfair. Bunt Richards would have

represented the Timberlake boys, but unfortunately, he hurt his ankle. This left only John to represent the boys. John suffered from a bad case of stage fright whenever more than five of the boys watched him dive. Skeets decided that he could fix the whole matter by using some psychology on John.

Mystery Stories

8. "There Will Come Soft Rains" - Ray Bradbury

Just one house is left standing after the nuclear explosion of the dreaded hydrogen bomb. It is the year, 1985, and this house is furnished with all the devices which provide for easy living. There are mechanical mice which dust and clean, a clock which sings the time of day and advises in which activity one should engage, a front door that surveys the coming of visitors and automatically opens when they approach, a stove which turns itself on and prepares meals, beds which warm themselves for anticipated sleepers, and a voice which chooses to recite poetry in the library.

9. "Joy Ride" - Edith List

When the policeman saw the carload of teenagers speeding and driving widely down the road, he assumed that they had been drinking and he immediately set out to warn them that a flood had washed out the river bridge. However, he was never able to catch them. All through that prom night, the rescue squad dragged the river bed. It was daybreak before the bridgekeeper saw the sign of tragedy.

10. "The Masque Of The Red Death" - Edgar Allan Poe

Because a plague was raging in his land, Young Prince Prospero

took a thousand of his favorite subjects into seclusion in a castle. This castle had been carefully built to keep intruders out. During the Prince's stay in this place, he decided to give a masquerade ball which would involve the use of seven large staterooms. During the ball, one guest appeared who had not been invited. He wore the mask of the "Red Death" and caused all the other guest to stop in their tracks.

11. "The Lady Or The Tiger" - Frank R. Stockton

When a barbaric king discovers that one of his courtiers is carrying on a love affair with his daughter, the princess, he uses an odd method of punishment. The courtier has to choose which of two doors to open. One contains a fierce tiger and the other contains a beautiful young maiden who will be married immediately to the prisoner if he opens the door which leads to her.

12. "The Ambitious Guest" - Nathaniel Hawthorne

September is usually a chilly month and nights are usually cold enough for families to light fires. Those families that lived in the Notch did just that. One such family received a visitor on one of the cold nights while they were sitting around their warm fire. This visitor related his adventures to the mountain people. They became so entertained that they forgot the dangerous conditions under which they were living. Here they were on the brink of disaster, completely unaware.

13. "The Tell-Tale Heart" - Edgar Allan Poe

The "I" character related the actual steps that he took when he murdered the old man. However, the old man's heart just wouldn't stop beating and; events took a strange turn.

14. "The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow" - Washington Irving

Ichabod Crane, the local school master, made romantic advances toward the lovely daughter of Van Tassel. When these advances were made, Katrina began to ignore her former suitor, Brom Bones. This provoked Brom and he therefore demanded that Ichabod meet him in a duel. When Ichabod refused, Brom and his gang began to play several tricks on him. One of these tricks frightened the schoolmaster.

15. "The Purloined Letter" - Edgar Allan Poe

When a letter was deliberately taken by Minister D_____ from a lady in high standing within the court, the Prefect was asked to recover it. Being of low intelligence, the Prefect had to employ the services of Dupin to help in the search of the missing letter. Dupin visited the Minister and obtained the letter by tricking the old guy into listening to a gun blast. It really isn't the lost of the letter that is amusing, but rather the method by which it is recovered.

Romance Stories

16. "A Visit Of Charity" - Eudora Welty

Marian, a fourteen year old campfire girl, goes to the Old Ladies' Home to visit with some patients. This visit will cause her to receive three points toward promotion in the Campfire Girls' Organization. She is introduced to two old ladies who give her quite a surprise.

17. "The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty" - James Thurber

Walter Mitty, an old guy who obeys his nagging wife without protests, goes completely out of his senses when he begins to

daydream. While driving his car, he imagines that he is commanding a Navy hydroplane, and when he drives pass a hospital, he imagines himself a medical attendant who has arrived just in time to prevent a disaster in the operating room. While walking down the street, he imagines that he is on trial in a courtroom for shooting someone. In his world of daydreams, he finally finds himself in the middle of a battlefield where he is consciously becoming the hero of the battalion until his wife's voice is heard above the noises of the battlefield.

18. "The Dry Rock" - Irwin Shaw

Helen had taken great pains in selecting the gown that she was to wear to Adele's dinner party. Little did she know that Tarloff, the old Russian, would have an accident on the way to the party, nor did she know that Fritzsimmons, her husband, would accompany Tarloff to the station with the policeman. She became quite outdone with the whole lot of these men and almost suggested that they forget the principle of the matter. Helen thought that the dinner party was more important than Tarloff's bloody nose.

19. "The Far And The Near" - Thomas Wolfe

Every day at an appointed time, a train passed a lovely little house in the country. For years, the engineer waved to a woman, a woman and a child, and two women. When the man retired from his job, he decided to seek out the two women who had waved faithfully to him for many years. Their reception was altogether different from the vision that the old man had so long held. These women were symbols of beauty when they were far away from him, but at close

range, he was surprised.

20. "The Gift Of The Magi" - O. Henry

Although Della and Jim were very poor and had nothing to give each other for Christmas, they both took their only valuables to shops and sold them in order to buy presents. Neither knew what the other was doing. Imagine the surprise when the true sources of gifts were discovered!

21. "The Devil And Daniel Webster" - Stephen Vincent Benet

Jabez Stone was having considerably poor luck when the stranger approached him and offered his services. Of course, Jabez promised to repay him, but never did. Daniel Webster helped Jabez to cheat the devil at his own game.

22. "The Devil And Tom Walker" - Washington Irving

When Tom Walker and Old Scratch made the bargain, Tom did not know that he would be the loser. Instead, he planned to outwit the devil, by carrying the Bible at all times. However, one morning, when he was in a rather bad mood, he forgot the Bible and the devil appeared on the scene. Tom was in trouble.

23. "The Necklace" - Guy De Maupassant

Mathilde was not too excited when Laisel, her husband, brought home the invitation to the Minister's Ball. She had nothing to wear. Her husband gave her his last money in order that she could buy a pretty dress. Still, she was not satisfied. There was no jewelry for her to wear with the dress. Madam Forestier, a close friend, loaned her a necklace. This necklace was lost during the ball. Mathilde felt duty-bound to replace it, and she spent the

next ten years paying the debt. At the end of those ten years, she made an amazing discovery.

24. "The Celebrated Jumping Frog Of Calaveras County"- Samuel Clemens

Simon Wheeler related the tale of Jim Leonidas to the visitor with much exaggeration. He told of how Jim Leonidas won money on bets about a bull pup called Andrew Jackson, the parson's sermons, the parson's wife's illness, rat terriers, chicken cats, a mare, tom cats, and Daniel Webster, a jumping frog. However, Jim became quite disappointed when Daniel lost a bet for him, but he didn't know that something had happened to the frog.

25. "The Luck Of Roaring Camp" - Bret Harte

Cherokee Sal, the crude Indian woman, gave birth to Luck in Roaring Camp. When this event took place, little did Stumpy, Kentuck, and all of the rest of the badmen know that the child would cause a change in their lives. They immediately set about cleaning the camp and themselves. They built new buildings and even decorated the old run-down house which belonged to Stumpy. They stopped cursing and using vile language, and they started singing songs. They made a complete change in their "lives."